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LONDON :
PUBLISHED BY JOHN MASON, 14, CITY-ROAD;
AND SOLD AT 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1837.

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THE LIFE
OF
THE REV. PEARD DICKINSON.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

REVISED AND CORRECTED

BY THE REV. JOSEPH BENSON.

**THROUGH every period of my life,
Thy goodness I'll pursue,
And after death, in distant worlds,
The pleasing theme renew.**

ADDISON.

PREFACE.

AT a time when it pleased God, by affliction, to prohibit me from pursuing the usual duties of my calling, in assisting the services of the church militant, and when I was rendered incapable of the delightful studies which are peculiar to my profession, I was led to review the mercies of my past life, and the various instances of the goodness and condescension of God towards me, both in the dispensations of his providence and grace. The consideration of these greatly affected my heart, and so inflamed my soul with love and gratitude to the God of my salvation, that I resolved, if he would be pleased to give me a little strength, I would testify of his grace to others. I soon began to make the attempt, which I resumed from time to time as my weakness would permit.

As such were the circumstances which gave birth to the present narrative, and such were the sentiments by which it was dictated, I shall perhaps be excused from offering any apology for its publication. Were any thing of this kind necessary, it might be sufficient merely to appeal to

the practice of some of the wisest and most excellent persons both amongst the ancients and moderns, who have thought it expedient, in this way, to bear testimony to the divine grace and goodness. Of this kind is the modest yet striking account which Justin Martyr gives of his conversion, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew ; that of Cyprian, in his treatise on the grace of God, inscribed to his friend Donatus ; and the still larger and more copious and interesting narrative of Augustine, in his Confessions. So many instances have likewise occurred among the moderns, that it would be superfluous to quote them. The harmony which subsists in the great outlines of every account of a genuine work of God, is a strong confirmation of the truth of the Gospel, and proves that the effects of divine grace have been uniformly the same ; and that the true religion of Jesus has always been attended with a divine power and efficacy upon the hearts of men, whether they lived in the days of the Apostles, in those of their successors, or, finally, in our own times.

There is, doubtless, a perfection in the works of Providence and grace, which is worthy of their divine Author : and if the enemies of vital religion would candidly consider this, they would find little reason to triumph on account of those weaknesses and imperfections of professors, by which the glory of the grace of God is too often

eclipsed in the Christian world. Let the sinful creature be for ever abased, while the Creator and Redeemer is eternally exalted and adored. Though I have had frequent reason to blush before God, when I have considered the many favours I have received at his hands, and the little improvement I have made of them in comparison of what I ought; and though I see reason for the deepest abasement before him; yet I do not consider this as being sufficient to deter me from attempting, as I can, to raise a feeble monument to his praise. Nay, it rather operates as an incentive with me, to testify of the riches of his grace to others.

I consider that time, which is one of the most precious gifts that God can here confer on man, is of the most precarious and uncertain tenure; and that this circumstance ought to awaken our attention to that higher state of being which commences in eternity. And though I am deeply sensible that human life is, at best, a fleeting shadow, which is ever changing its form and aspect, till at length it wholly disappears, and now find my own life to be actually passing away like a vapour that is soon dispersed; and though I have long and severely felt that the immortal spirit, oppressed with weakness and pain, is incapable of exerting its noblest powers; yet would I fain give glory to the God of my salvation. His mercy and lovingkindness demand the tribute of my praise. I would review the dispensations of his

providence, and adore the riches of his grace, that I may excite others to praise him for his goodness, and to put their trust under the shadow of his wings. Happy shall I be, if, in recording the incidents of my past life, and reflecting on the ways of God with men, I shall be enabled, in any measure, to promote the divine glory, which is, indeed, and ever ought to be, the ultimate end of all my wishes.

THE LIFE
OF
THE REV. PEARD DICKINSON.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS born at Topsham, a small sea-port town near Exeter, in the county of Devon, on Thursday, November 16th, 1758. My constitution was weak from my birth, and in my frame was soon discovered the union of an active and vigorous mind, with a body that could neither endure the extremes of toil or pain for any length of time, my strength and animal spirits being soon exhausted. This inconvenience, however, though sometimes painful and oppressive, has often been rendered highly subservient to my best interests, and has not a little contributed to promote my eternal advantage. At the same time, I can never sufficiently adore the God of my life, that I was born of parents who not only had a sincere regard for vital religion, but the

deepest veneration for the inspired writings, with which they endeavoured to impress the minds of their children in early life. Providence had likewise blessed them with a competence; and thus they, as well as their family, were removed from the two opposite extremes of affluence and wealth on the one hand, and a state of painful dependence on the other, which so often prove injurious to mankind.

My two eldest brothers were sent at an early age to Holland, to finish their education, with a view to prepare them for a commercial life. The first of them was a promising youth, of an open temper, and an obliging disposition, who, not long after his return to England, broke a blood-vessel, and died, deservedly lamented by his friends. The last words he was heard to articulate were, "Thy will be done." The other soon succeeded him, and was placed with his uncle, a merchant, at that time trading to Holland, Flanders, the Netherlands, and Hamburg.

My father was a man of strong reasoning powers, and much addicted to mathematical studies, for which, through life, he had a strong predilection. He had likewise formed an acquaintance with the municipal and common law of England. At the same time, such was the versatility of his genius, that he could direct his attention with ease and success to whatever branch of knowledge he thought proper to cultivate.

And as the whole force of his mind was directed towards objects of a serious and an important nature, so he could not endure any thing that was trivial, or appeared to be superficial in the writings, conversation, or pursuits of men. To such a parent, the cultivation of his children's minds could not be regarded as a matter of small moment. He therefore accustomed them to the pursuit of knowledge from their childhood, with a vigour, indeed, that in some instances proved injurious to their health and spirits. Yet I have reason to bless God for having been trained, in this way, to a serious application from my earliest youth, and to some degree of economy in the distribution of my time.

Nor ought I here to pass over in silence the various instances in which the care of my heavenly Father was manifested towards me in my childhood, particularly in rescuing me from many accidents and dangers, which otherwise must have proved fatal to me. Such instances indeed of the providential goodness of God towards men often occur, but they are too commonly either regarded slightly, or wholly forgotten. The recollection, however, of these favours, conferred upon us by the great Lord of the universe at a time when we were incapable of estimating their value, or perceiving their consequences, may afford us ample matter for the most profitable reflection in every period of our lives.

The first principles of a moral nature that I recollect to have attended to, and which were strongly impressed upon my mind, were a solemn and constant regard to truth, and an abhorrence of all dissimulation and falsehood; the practice of mercy universally, and a detestation of cruelty, as most diabolical in its nature; the thinking, speaking, and acting towards others, as I might wish them, in similar circumstances, to act towards me. These, with some general, leading principles of religion, which make an appeal to the reason and consciences of all men, were, as I distinctly remember, repeatedly inculcated upon me by my parents. Nor was their labour wholly lost; for though sin and folly were too often prevalent with me, and the corruption of my nature discovered itself in a variety of ways, yet much evil was certainly prevented, and, through the divine blessing, my heart was frequently attracted towards that which is good. And as my judgment became better informed, so my conscience was armed with additional power and authority to execute its office upon me. The impious and dangerous plan, therefore, of Rousseau, who would have children left to follow the blind impulse and guidance of nature, was completely confuted in my case. From my own experience I can testify, in a thousand instances, that had I been left to the mere guidance and impulse of nature, I should have been hurried to the brink of destruction;

and folly, and remorse, and irretrievable ruin, must certainly have been the consequence. I daily see reason, therefore, to bless God for having caused me to be instructed from a child in the way in which I should go; for I have proved it to be the way of peace and of happiness. I have only to lament my frequent deviations from that path both in early childhood and youth, as well as in maturer years.

But, before I proceed, it will be necessary to take some notice of a few steps which my father took in early life, in which his children could not but be interested. And this I shall do under the impression of those sentiments of filial respect and gratitude which are due to his memory. It appears that his entrance on the marriage state was attended with, at least, some small degree of precipitation. This measure must have been attended likewise with a neglect of some circumstances, on a proper regard to which the happiness and comfort of families very much depend. Not long after, he opened a linen-draper's shop, in the neighbourhood of Bishopsgate-street London. Here the gradual and patient manner in which most are obliged to proceed, before they can hope to form anything like an established business, were not congenial to his views, nor agreeable to the temper of his mind. After he had persisted for some time, and had reason to suspect that there was little probability of his

succeeding in the present way, he began seriously to think of quitting it altogether. As soon therefore as he could dispose of his goods, which must have been attended with considerable loss, and he had settled his other affairs, he determined to direct his course, with his little family, towards his friends and relations in the west of England, in order to consult with them, on what steps it would be advisable for him to take in the present exigency. This resolution was equally wise and prudent ; for as he had now the prospect of a rising family, and had failed in his first attempts to make provision for them, it became necessary that he should proceed in future with the utmost caution and circumspection. The journey from London to the west was, however, attended with a very unpleasant circumstance. A large portmanteau, containing many things of value, which had been carefully packed up, and strongly bound to one of the post-chaises in which they travelled, was irrecoverably lost. This circumstance was the more perplexing, as it contained some papers of consequence. It is not, however, unusual in such circumstances to see affliction sometimes added to the afflicted.

Amongst my father's relations and friends, who chiefly resided at Tiverton in Devonshire, there were some who, to the possession of very considerable wealth, joined that commanding

influence and near access to men in power, which commonly attend on the majesty of money. Their friendship and interest, therefore, were naturally considered as a matter of no small importance. Nor were they wanting, on their part, in giving repeated assurances of their benevolent intentions; intentions which were often verified in a manner that reflected honour upon themselves. It is sufficiently obvious, however, that when a man's first attempts in life have proved unsuccessful, the opportunities which may offer a second time are seldom attended with equal advantages. The objects of his choice must necessarily be much more limited, and he can seldom hope to be indulged so far as wholly to follow either his own judgment or inclination.

The present situation of his affairs, however, required that no time should be lost. It likewise became necessary to adopt such a method as might at once soon render him some assistance towards the support of his family, while it eventually led to something more advantageous, by which he might hereafter be enabled to make some comfortable provision for them. As the interest of his friends was closely connected with Government, it was thought that they might most effectually serve him in the Customs or Excise. And as that interest had already been successfully employed in the latter department of the revenue, my father, with the certain prospect of very

liberal preferment, accepted, not long after, of a place in the Excise.

His situation affording him much leisure, he devoted a great deal of time to the cultivation and improvement of his children, whom he now carefully instructed in various branches of useful knowledge. He taught his sons the more necessary and fundamental rules of arithmetic, vulgar and decimal fractions, the extraction of the square and cube roots, the construction and use of logarithms, geometry, and other parts of the mathematics; and he appropriated some time every week for the study of geography. He likewise compiled an English grammar for their use, in which the principles of the language were delivered with great clearness and precision.

Nothing could exceed the pleasure which I felt at this time in hearing my father's conversation. It was so instructive and rational, abounded in so many allusions to history, and was attended with such an air of piety and goodness, that it made a deep and lasting impression on my mind. And as its influence appeared in opening and invigorating the powers of the intellect, so it tended to attach my heart and affections so strongly to him, that, in process of time, I actually considered him as one of the wisest and best of men: a partiality which will, perhaps, at least be deemed excusable.*

* The account which Horace has given us of his excellent father, and of the attention paid by him to the education and

In due time he was promoted to the district of Taunton, in Somersetshire, which he continued to superintend for a great number of years. And his conduct here certainly entitled him to the regard of conscientious and good men; for he watched over the interests of the revenue with active vigilance and inflexible integrity. This, however, naturally excited the attacks of malevolence, and exposed him, in process of time, to the resentment of many enemies; but as he acted from disinterested principles, he pursued his path, and continued immovable in the discharge of his duty.

morals of his son, so often reminded me of my own, and so strongly excited my gratitude, and there was also so striking a resemblance between them, at this time and for some years after, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of transcribing at least the following lines :—

*Insuevit pater optimus hoc me,
Ut fugerem exemplis vitiorum quæque notando.*
Sat., lib. i., iv., v. 105.

*Sic me
Formabat puerum dictis : et sive jubebat,
Ut facerem quid ; Habeas auctorem quo facias hoc ;
Sive vetabat, An hoc honestum et inutile factu
Necne sit addubites ; flagret rumore malo cum
Hic atque ille ?* Sat., lib. i., iv., v. 120.

*Ipse mihi custos incorruptissimus omnes
Circum doctores aderat. Quid multa ? pudicum
(Qui primus virtutis honos,) servavit ab omni
Non solum facto, verum opprobrio quoque turpi.*
Sat., lib. i., vi., v. 81.

This circumstance sometimes caused him to wish for a removal ; and prompted him, at others, to renew his applications to his friends for a more vigorous exertion of their interest in procuring his preferment. The person who at that time represented the borough of Tiverton had several interviews with some of the Commissioners of Excise for this purpose ; the result of which was, that every thing seemed to be in a fair way for the accomplishment of my father's wishes. In the mean time, however, some of his enemies were not wanting to misrepresent his conduct to those who were in power, who could not be wholly acquainted with the principles from which he acted. What effect this might have upon his interests, cannot now be fully ascertained. His temper, however, in process of time, was a little irritated ; and he ventured once or twice to express his sentiments to those on whom he placed his chief dependence, with a degree of poignancy and satire which, I believe, never was forgiven. In consequence of this, he finally lost all those advantages which he had so fair a title to expect, and which otherwise he certainly would have attained.

His friends, however, did not cease to confer many valuable favours upon him. And these were continued for so many years, that they clearly evinced the tender care of a gracious Providence, which is often seen at the same time to

watch over the interests and welfare of individuals and of families. He received a handsome freehold estate in land, situated in Devonshire, which, being conferred on him by a deed of gift, made a very comfortable addition to his income. This was followed by many valuable presents in money, which he continued to receive for a succession of years, upon the whole, to the amount of not less than three thousand pounds. By these and other means, which might be mentioned, provision was not only made for his family, but some of his children were put in possession of many solid and important advantages. Of these, through the divine goodness, I was permitted to have my share ; and I hope ever to retain a grateful sense of those favours which were thus providentially conferred upon me.

That part of early life, in which the imagination paints every thing in the most false and glowing colours ; in which the objects of sense obtrude themselves upon the minds of thoughtless youth with an almost irresistible force ; when passion and inexperience are daily subverting the throne and dominion of reason and conscience, and the voice of God himself is but seldom heard, and little regarded ; this period, so full of danger, folly, and sin, was spent in the vale of Taunton-Dean, where I continued to reside for many years, and where I often justly felt the rod of God, and the necessary restraints and discipline of man :

without which I certainly should have become a very thoughtless and dissipated creature.

I was initiated in the Greek and Latin classics, likewise, at Taunton, under the Rev. Joshua Toulmin, M.A., whose learning and talents entitled him to the highest academical honours, and who has, since the publication of an improved edition of Neal's "History of the Nonconformists," taken the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Under this gentleman's tuition, for whom I shall ever retain the most respectful regard, I was enabled to make a rapid proficiency, which was not a little owing to the indulgent, liberal, and judicious method which he adopted in superintending the education of his pupils. The first impression which some of the beautiful passages in the classic writers made upon my mind was so strong, that I was soon captivated by them. They gained such an ascendancy over me, that I could scarce ever banish them from my thoughts: no, not at those solemn hours when things of infinitely greater importance ought to have engrossed all the faculties and powers of my soul. I dreamed of them by night, and rose at unseasonable hours to renew the study of them. As I continued resolutely to persist in this course, my father gave me several intimations of the pleasure and satisfaction it afforded him; in addition to which, Dr. Toulmin likewise soon favoured me with several marks of his partiality and kindness. He gave

me free access to his valuable library, and afterwards, at my request, instructed me in the principles of the Hebrew language; but what entitles him still more to my gratitude and respect, he watched over my morals with a kind of paternal regard. I recollect also that it was in this gentleman's study I first formed the design of cultivating an acquaintance with the Oriental languages.

The pleasure arising from a continual accession of new ideas, joined to the enlargement of the powers of the mind, and the prospect of extensive knowledge, was inexpressible: at least, such were my views at that time. And as I possessed a large fund of vivacity, blended with a degree of good humour, some persons supposed me to be indeed a very happy creature. But, alas! they were wholly deceived; for I was then an utter stranger to myself, and had a spirit within me that was alienated from God, the sovereign good.

Yet amidst the gaiety and thoughtlessness of youth, I was often made to feel the force of keen reflection, and some transient beams of light would occasionally shine upon my soul, and discover the darkness that reigned within. My mind, at this time, was often filled with terrible apprehensions of the divine displeasure, which sprung from a consciousness of the inward depravity of my nature, and the sinfulness of my life. For, young and unblamable as I might appear in

the sight of those who did not know me, my conscience was defiled with guilt; and I frequently acted contrary to the clearest dictates of reason, and the warning voice of the word and Spirit of God. The consequence of which was, that I sometimes became a prey to inward remorse, while at others I was overwhelmed with guilty dread.

I can early and distinctly trace the influence of the divine Spirit upon my heart. I remember, in particular, that, at three or four years of age, I had a solemn sense of the presence and power of God, and repeatedly felt the most awful convictions of the certainty and eternal duration of a future state. About this time my infant heart was often drawn out in prayer. And I then entertained no doubt, but that the great God condescended to hear even the voice of a child. Happy indeed would it have been for my early youth, had I improved these gracious visitations; but they were, alas! too soon opposed by the principles of degenerate nature, and violently counteracted by a mind that was at enmity with God. The streams that flowed from this source of corruption soon became visible in my life. For, though I was preserved from outward enormities, yet the seeds of inward evil were rapidly springing up within me, and ere long brought forth all the poisonous fruits of sin and death.

God was pleased, in due time, to put the cup of repentance into my hands ; but it was bitter as gall to my sinful soul. The milder influences of his grace I had neglected, and the various overtures of his mercy and longsuffering I had disregarded, and, in too many instances, for many years trampled under foot. They were therefore at length succeeded by the terrors of divine justice.

I was but little more than fifteen years of age, when this dreadful dispensation took place, which forms one of the most memorable eras of my life. And it was attended with such circumstances, that the recollection of it never can be effaced from my mind. God, the Searcher of hearts, and the Recorder of past offences, at this time brought all my sins to my remembrance, and gave me such a conviction of their aggravated guilt and demerit, that my soul fainted within me. That God, whose mercy and grace I had abused from my infant years, now appeared inexorable, and regardless of my cries and groans, which I poured out before him in secret. He was represented to my awakened conscience as a righteous Judge, armed with vindictive justice and irresistible power, terrible as a lion that is ready to seize the prey, while no possibility of escape remained for the sinful soul.

In my distress, I made a thousand vows and resolutions that I would instantly break off from

my sins, and reform my life. But, alas ! when I had the least intermission of my anguish, I returned to my evil courses, and my corruptions again overpowered me. I frequently sinned yet more and more, increased my guilt, and hardened my heart. The arrows of the Almighty therefore continued to stick fast within me, in consequence of which I could take no rest by night or by day. In vain did I strive to relieve or amuse my troubled mind by various pursuits and inventions : wherever I turned, I met the anger of a righteous God, and sunk beneath the terrors of his justice.

My health, in a short time, was deeply affected by these things. The anguish of my mind, and the displeasure of my God, were followed by a severe intermitting fever. Death began to stare me in the face ; and the great gulf now yawned, as it were, ready to swallow me up, while evil angels were permitted, in various ways, to buffet and torment me. Let the infidel, and the reasoners of this world, scoff at these things, and let them make light of the solemn inflictions of divine justice : the believer in Jesus knows them to be infinitely more dreadful than any language can express. My guilty soul was incessantly pursued by gloomy and horrible ideas, which haunted me by night and by day. These were but the harbingers of the king of terrors, who appeared ready to strike the fatal blow. What

shall I render to thee, my most merciful God, for that unspeakable goodness which was manifested at this dreadful season, in secretly supporting a poor creature, who must otherwise have sunk into the depths of despair, and been overwhelmed with the blackness of darkness for ever !

At intervals my heart was violently agitated by conflicting passions. Sometimes I wished that I had never been born. I would have given ten thousand worlds had my existence been as short in its duration as the fowls of the air, and as perishable as the flowers of the field. Again, I trembled at the thought of extinction, and the annihilation of my immortal spirit seemed insupportable. Often did I cast an anxious glance at the days in which the Son of God became incarnate, and dwelt on earth. "Surely," thought I, "I would have cast myself at his feet ; perhaps he would have had compassion on my sorrows." But God, who intended to make me a witness of his justice and grace to others, and was giving me repentance unto life, continued to wound me still deeper ; for the time of my deliverance was not yet come.

My disorder, after continuing some weeks, having abated, I endeavoured to resume my usual attention to study. But things began now to assume a different aspect. Horace, whose Epistles I was then reading, appeared to have lost many of his charms ; and the fiery and exuberant

genius of Homer was ill suited to my present feeble and dejected state. I was sometimes overwhelmed with terror in a moment while at school, (the real cause of which I concealed from others, who supposed it to be a return of my complaint,) and was often led towards the fields, in order to give a turn to my mind.

The setting of the sun, and the absence of the light, I had reason to dread ; for my sleep was disturbed by terrible dreams, and God, who visits in the night season, was rendering the work of his Spirit still deeper, and was thus more effectually convincing me of the dreadful consequences of sin. Once I dreamed that I was condemned at the tribunal of God. At another time I saw the Judge among the clouds of heaven, while the earth was on fire, the elements melting with fervent heat, the rocks rending, the graves opening, and the dead rising in every direction. I saw the angels of God gathering the saints from the four winds of heaven, and ascending with them to meet their Lord in the air. During these awful transactions, I sat pensive and trembling on the edge of a large tomb, from which several of the blessed dead had just been raised. A mighty angel thrice descended, and conducted three of them in succession to their Lord. He came for a fourth, and was ready to depart, without taking the least notice of me. My heart was almost broken. I followed him with an anxious

eye, and noticed attentively, that he had just turned, and was about to spread his wings, and depart with his happy charge, when he suddenly and unexpectedly looked round with an air of celestial majesty. The form of his countenance then changed to stern severity ; and, glancing at me with his piercing eyes, and waving his hand, he pronounced those awful words, " There is no room in heaven for such as you ! " He vanished like lightning. I started, and instantly awoke, trembling with horror.

Notwithstanding I was, for a long time, without any hope of mercy, I continued to cry unto God with my voice, and poured out my groans unceasingly before him. Yet I felt my heart hard like the adamant. I now saw, that if ever I was saved, it must be by an act of almighty power, and of the riches of divine grace. Although I was yet a stranger to the peace of God, and the sweet Spirit of divine adoption, yet my life was now outwardly reformed. There was a sedateness in my conduct, and a seriousness reigning in my whole deportment, which was noticed by all who saw me. And some began to tell me, that I was a very excellent youth. However, I was so filled with self-aborrence and dread, that their words made no impression upon me. The tenderness of my conscience was now considerable ; and this appeared in various instances. The strictest truth influenced my sen-

timents and my conversation, and I was very exact in the observance of the Lord's day. The boys in the class to which I belonged had, for a considerable time, wholly depended on me, to construe the whole of their lessons before they were called up. This now appeared to me to be wrong; for my conscience would not allow me to encourage them any longer in this idle and mischievous custom. Two or three of them having been disgraced and corrected on account of it, one of them very unjustly quarreled with me. I endeavoured to remonstrate with him on the unjustness of his conduct, while he was striving to irritate me to the utmost. A short conflict ensued in my soul, when that awful declaration of our Lord was impressed on my mind by the eternal Spirit, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this sinful and adulterous generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." I knew the voice of God, and was enabled instantly to obey it; and thus my soul was kept in peace, and my adversary was disappointed. I record this instance with gratitude to thee, my gracious God; for this was the first victory that thy poor creature ever obtained over the spirit of the world.

These beginnings of the divine life, which I had thus happily experienced, and the convic-

tions which had been thus deep, thus genuine and salutary, were the pure work of the Spirit of God alone, without the agency of any creature whatever. As they all sprung from the free unmerited grace of God in Christ, to him alone be all the glory! I now saw that I had reason to adore the divine Providence that I had been daily accustomed to hear the Scriptures read in my father's family. These, with some of the most excellent writings of the Puritan Divines, had often conveyed important instruction to my thoughtless heart. The "Saints' Everlasting Rest" had particularly struck me, and the account of the Martyrs. What I once regarded with too much indifference, now appeared very precious to me, and God brought many of the truths which I had heard to my remembrance. The apostolical lives and labours of those great men, Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield, I had frequently heard of, and had read some of their Journals. And the reproach cast upon them by an evil world, notwithstanding their exemplary and unparalleled labours, convinced me that they were the messengers of the Most High, and the true witnesses of Jesus. I also met with two or three of their followers; and was struck with the calm recollection, and benevolence of their tempers, and with the air of piety which appeared in their whole deportment, so that I could have cast myself at their feet, being secretly charmed with them.

While I was thus favoured with gradual accessions of light and strength, and peace and hope began to dawn with some degree of brightness in my soul, two circumstances occurred, which might have proved fatal to me, had they not been prevented by a gracious God. The first was a design of my father to place me with a Surgeon at Taunton. This gentleman, who was a distant relation, had passed the meridian of life. He was a man of a grave deportment, and of excellent morals, but a stranger to vital religion. I should probably have been fixed in this place, had he not previously formed a design of gradually retiring from business. This would, probably, have proved injurious to the work of grace upon my heart, as the number of gay and thoughtless acquaintance with which I was surrounded at Taunton would doubtless have exposed me to a torrent of ridicule and persecution which might have been too strong for my young and inexperienced soul. The other was a design of sending me to Christ-Church College, at Oxford, which would have certainly been carried into execution, had not the account which Dr. Kennicott gave of the expense that would attend my residence there deterred my father from it, as he saw he could not possibly do it without injuring his other children. I used many arguments with him, but in vain : he persisted in his resolution. And I now perceive that it was graciously and providentially

ordered for my good. My heavenly Father well knew the dangers to which I should be exposed, and that Oxford was a place ill suited to my present state of mind; and I should, doubtless, at the same time, have been exposed to connexions which would have been dangerous to me in life. Let my God, therefore, be glorified for this also. Doubtless he then preserved my soul from the fowler's snare, and the subtle designs of the old serpent.

This deliverance terminates the account of my early youth: in reviewing which, I perceive a marvellous concurrence in the providence and grace of God, both which were manifestly promoting, not only the salvation of a creature, sinful and degenerate, but likewise laying the foundation of my future happiness and usefulness in life.

CHAPTER II.

THE period which succeeds between early youth and manhood, on various accounts, is one of the most dangerous in human life. In this, the conflict between passion and reason, nature and grace, is the most strongly manifested. A state of restraint and heavenly discipline was

necessary for my peace; and this my gracious God was now preparing for me. It will be necessary to give some account of a dispensation which was finally rendered truly profitable to my soul, and undoubtedly subservient to my best interests.

My father having heard of a family in Bristol, with whom he had a strong desire to place me, had concerted a plan to send me thither, with a view, if possible, to withdraw my mind from its favourite pursuits, and imperceptibly incline my attention to business. Accordingly, on a beautiful day in the spring of 1775, I was despatched thither in company with a friend, in whom he could confide. We took horse pretty early in the morning. I put an Elzevir edition of Cicero's Offices in one pocket, and the Virgil of Minellius in the other. At the same time, I obtained a promise that my other books should soon follow. My fellow-traveller, who was an agreeable companion, took care that nothing should be wanting on the road to make my journey pleasant. In the evening we arrived in safety, and found the place of our destination with ease. The front of the house was adorned with gold and silver watches, and with various articles of plate and jewellery. These, however, attracted but little of my attention. We were conducted into a small parlour, and received with a frank and an obliging welcome; charms which have ever had

greater weight than all the studied forms of elegance in the world. I had not spent more than a day or two in the family, before I perceived that the good lady was a Methodist. I was therefore agreeably surprised one evening, when she proposed my accompanying her to a place of worship belonging to Mr. Wesley's Connexion. The service was solemn, my soul was refreshed in waiting upon God, and I renewed my engagements to love and serve him, and returned with much serenity and joy.

My father honoured us with a visit in due time. And although I understood his intentions, and secretly wished to counteract them, yet I perceived that it would be a vain attempt; for his authority then was absolutely irresistible. At this time, therefore, I was obliged to submit; the consequence of which was, a vain attempt to force the natural bias of my mind for the space of about four years, which included the whole term of my residence in Bristol. All this I now perceive was secretly connected with the designs of a gracious Providence, ultimately intending my profit; which, from my soul, I now adore, though at that time I too often thought it a hard and painful dispensation.

Some part of those four years appeared to be the longest in my whole life. Yet were they far from being lost time. Many important lessons had I an opportunity of learning, which I possi-

bly might not have attained in any other way. Besides, I had many opportunities of considering attentively the work of God in the human soul in all its parts. Nor was it of small consequence to get an acquaintance with the corruptions of my nature. I was mercifully secured, during the most dangerous period of my life, from an evil world. Whereas, had I been sent too soon to the University, it might have cost me many sorrows, and deprived me of all that I now consider most valuable in life. The frequent opportunities I had of joining in prayer with the people of God, of visiting the sick, and being engaged in other spiritual exercises, not only tended to keep me devoted to God myself, but were all gradually preparing me for the ministry, and were surely of as much importance, in this view, as the knowledge of the languages, and the study of the sciences.

Soon after, on my first residence at Bristol, I became a member of Mr. Wesley's society. By a diligent and solemn attention to all the means of grace, my soul was brought nearer and nearer to my God, and the work of the Spirit was manifestly deepened in my heart. I now earnestly sought the Spirit of adoption, by offering strong cries and tears unto God; and the coming of the Lord was drawing nigh. One morning, after I had continued in prayer till I was near fainting, the Spirit of God descended like lightning from

heaven, and bare witness with my spirit that I was his adopted child. I looked up to heaven with confidence, and from this moment had a clear and divine evidence of the pardoning love of God, whom I was now emboldened to consider as my Father in Jesus reconciled. The heavenly joy and peace which flowed in upon my believing soul was so strong for some weeks, and my communion with God was so uninterrupted, that I could scarce keep my eyes from looking up to heaven incessantly. I seemed surrounded, penetrated, and filled with God. So great was the consolation afforded me after the bitter distress which I had known during the time of my convictions, and the pangs of the new birth!

My soul now flew with ardour to the ordinances of my God. The name of Jesus was as ointment poured forth. His titles, his characters, his offices, appeared unspeakably lovely and glorious. "My Lord, and my God, my Jesus, and my all," was the language of my heart unceasingly. He appeared most adorable, and most lovely, on account of his infinite holiness, and as he is "the Lord our righteousness." Little did I then suppose that the strength of my faith, the ardour of my soul, or the lively emotions of my joy would ever subside.

It pleased God, however, in due time, to instruct me in the doctrines of the cross, and to convince me of the necessity of being conformed to a

crucified Jesus. Those words of the Apostle, "Ye are called, not only to believe on him, but to suffer for his sake," were often powerfully brought to my remembrance by the Spirit of God.

The following spring, 1776, I was visited with a malignant putrid fever, in which my life was long despaired of. During a state of delirium, my soul was sometimes inwardly and powerfully visited by a heart-searching God. While my spirit seemed hovering over the eternal world, God was searching and proving it, and I had a solemn conviction, that, through Christ my Redeemer, I was accepted before the tribunal of God. Yet I could not help pondering on these words of the Apostle: "The righteous themselves scarcely are saved." This dreadful and long-continued affliction so shook my constitution, which was always weak, that I have never since recovered either my former health or spirits.

As I was now effectually separated from the world, I had fellowship with the disciples of Jesus only, many of whom were dearer to me than my own life. I admired their spiritual gifts, I was edified and delighted with their heavenly conversation, and I revered the image of my God which was brightly impressed upon them. I saw others, who seemed to move at a vast distance from the Sun of righteousness, and pitied them, though I had reason to think they were secretly attracted by him.

The bare remembrance of the blessings which I received amongst the people of God; during my stay at Bristol, fills my soul with gratitude and joy. I am refreshed in this hour with reviewing the many days of the Son of man, and the various outpourings of the Spirit that I witnessed among them. My heart is and will be inseparably united to my dear brethren, who often strengthened my hands by their faith, their sympathy, and their prayers. And I hope to spend a blessed eternity among them; for many of their names are doubtless in the book of life.

A diversified scene afterwards took place. Sometimes my views were divinely enlarged, and my desires after a larger measure of the Redeemer's grace were very earnest, and, for a considerable time, I strove to attain that glorious fulness of the Spirit, which is the privilege of adult believers. At others, my spiritual prospects were clouded, and my soul languished and declined. I was sometimes severely assaulted by my spiritual enemies, which forced me to cry to the Lord Jesus for deliverance. And many were the conflicts which I endured in consequence of the remains of corrupt nature. Yet I never was suffered to be remiss in attending the means of grace.

My mind was likewise, on some occasions, much irritated, by supposing that all my time was thrown away in my present situation; at

others, I determined to wait the interposition of Providence, which I had an inward assurance would certainly take place. This was sometimes so strong, that I cannot doubt but that it was given me from above. Yet how absurd and unreasonable is the haste of nature ! Notwithstanding the whole of this interval, I was not more than of sufficient age, when called by the providence of God, to assist the venerable Mr. Perronet, at Shoreham in Kent, in the year in which I was admitted to full orders by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The manner in which the providence of God effected my deliverance was so singular, that it would be a blamable omission to pass it by unnoticed, as it seemed to spring from a very improbable circumstance. I had, during three years, received remittances from my father to a considerable amount. These were solicited, on some occasions, with more frequency than he approved of. My father once or twice, by way of punishment, determined to straiten me. This induced me to make some expostulations, and I began openly to avow my intentions. I had several times dropped intimations to my parents that I should take the first opportunity of resuming my former studies, and devote myself to the ministry, to which I had reason to believe that God had called me. And I more than once assured my father, that I should take effectual means to carry

my design into execution. Whatever degree of human weakness there might have been on my part, I have reason to believe, from what followed, that I was divinely directed in taking the resolution, and in determining to prosecute it.

There was a lady in the west of England, a relation of my father, who had considerable influence with him, and from whom he had, indeed, great expectations. This lady was sister of the late Oliver Peard, Esq., of Tiverton, in Devon, who, dying intestate, left her in the full possession of more than one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. To this lady, by whose express desire I bore her name in baptism, I made a representation of my situation, and requested her interposition. On this single point turned, in a great measure, my future designation in life. Mrs. Peard, in the most prompt and obliging manner, attended to my request. She informed my father of his son's views and inclinations, and, at the same time, informed him that it was her wish that I should go immediately to the University. He knew that too much depended on his acquiescence to make any objections. A plan was soon arranged. In a short time, I took an amicable leave of the family at Bristol, and had no idea that I loved them so much as when it came to the point of parting. Thus terminated four as long years as ever I spent in my life, including a period full of danger and inexperience I deeply regret some

instances of youthful rashness and indiscretion; while the recollection of the kindness and compassion of my God fills my soul with gratitude and adoration. His paternal providence was evidently pursuing one important and gracious design, first to bring me nearer to my God, and to a more intimate acquaintance with my sinfulness, helplessness, and entire dependence upon him, and the riches of his grace, that I might hereafter testify of his love and compassion to others, and, at length, minister before him in his sanctuary here on earth.

A new era now commences, which will be resumed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

THE spring and summer of 1779 were agreeably diversified by a variety of new scenes, connexions, business, and prospects. Having left Bristol, I took a short excursion into the country, to pay my respects to my friends in Somersetshire and Devon. From thence I proceeded to Oxford, which I reached sufficiently early to keep the Easter term. By the advice of the Rev. Mr. Browne, Vicar of Kingston, near Taunton, I was entered a Commoner of St. Edmund Hall; and by his recommendation, I was introduced to two

gentlemen, who had been formerly his pupils, one belonging to the Hall, and another to Pembroke College, whose friendship was valuable to me. They both died, however, within less than two years after I came to the University. I purchased some valuable books recommended by my Tutor, formed a laborious plan of study, attended the stated business required by the statutes of the University with zeal and diligence, and looked up to heaven for assistance and success. After the end of Act term, agreeably to a preconcerted plan, I returned into the country with my friend to the Rev. Mr. Browne's, in order to spend the long vacation with him. He was the Minister of a large parish, situated in a delightful country in the neighbourhood of Taunton. This gentleman was an elegant scholar, and a warm-hearted and generous friend. His sentiments were refined by the sincerest piety, and his conversation was replete with true politeness, diversified, and interesting. Many were the delightful hours which I passed with him. I loved him as a father; I never liked to have him silent. I walked with him, rode out with him; in short, was with him whenever it was in my power. And as he was full of anecdotes respecting those great men, Mr. Wesley, Mr. Whitefield, and Mr. Fletcher, and most of the celebrated Preachers that had made their appearance since the last great revival of religion in these kingdoms, I was unspeakably gratified

with the very copious communications he continued to make on this head. I attended his ministry with considerable edification, and as he constantly appropriated one evening for meeting the serious part of his parishioners in the school-room, which was near his house, I assisted in prayer, and met them during his absence. I read the classics with him, wrote essays for his revision and correction, and assisted him, for a short season, in his school. In short, it was impossible that the providence of God should have favoured me with a more useful, agreeable, or advantageous situation.

Here I first met with Sir H— T—, who, during my continuance with Mr. Browne, twice visited his father-in-law; for he had married one of the daughters of the Vicar of Kingston. In the second visit, I had an opportunity of seeing a good deal of this celebrated man. He conversed frequently with me, and a kind of intimacy insensibly took place, which was afterwards much increased when he came to reside, for a short season, at Christ-Church College, Oxford. This gentleman is rather above the common standard: his person is elegantly formed, and his countenance pleasing. His profile is remarkably striking. His manners are simple, dignified, and suitable to his rank. He is a man of learning and talents, and an admirer of real excellence. One trait predominates in his character, which the most exalted persons

would do well to imitate : he is a lover of frankness and undisguised sincerity, and hates, even to execration, every kind and degree of dissimulation, under whatever veil it may be concealed, whether of the most refined policy, or the most insinuating politeness.

How transitory are the scenes of earthly happiness ! The time spent in this delightful situation, at Kingston, swiftly passed away, like most of the enjoyments here on earth. The Michaelmas term now drawing near, I was obliged to prepare for returning to Oxford, which I did with some kind of reluctance : however, I had sufficient resolution, in due time, to bury myself amongst the academic shades. Every new situation introduces a man to peculiar snares and dangers. The great seminaries, as they are at present regulated, are certainly dangerous to young men. Watchfulness, circumspection, and prayer, and a diligent attention to study, are their great security. A man who acts thus will find that the grace of God is sufficient for him in every situation. He who escapes other dangers here is frequently drawn into a prodigality of expense, which often proves injurious to him as long as he lives. From this I was graciously preserved : parties of pleasure, as they were termed, had too much dissipation and extravagance to suit either my health or my inclination. An indulgent Providence had furnished me with every comfort. And though the liberality

of my friends had placed me in a situation at the University which was truly respectable, my expenses seldom amounted to much more than one hundred pounds per annum. And during my residence at Oxford I had purchased a collection of valuable books, which has since been gradually increased from year to year, till it has arrived at a considerable amount.

For the two first years I was scarce ever exposed to any danger of which I had not some previous admonition or presentiment given me by the providence of God in some way or other. These were intended, from time to time, to animate my soul to greater watchfulness and prayer. One remarkable instance I cannot suppress, without ingratitude to that paternal Providence which has constantly watched over my peace; and it was certainly given by Him who seals instruction in the night season, when deep sleep falleth upon man. I dreamed that I was walking near the brink of a river with one of my former friends, who at that time had some real love to religion, though I believe it amounted to little more than some gracious desires which were too much like the morning cloud and the early dew. The course of the river lay in nearly a right line, and there was nothing to intercept the view either to the east or the west. I was leaning on my friend's arm pursuing the path that lay near the brink, and we were calmly conversing on the things of

God. The stream was agitated by a slight breeze, and the sun was sinking in the west, while its evening glories were veiled by some lowering clouds. Accidentally turning to the left, which was nearest the river, my friend being on the right, we perceived something floating on the surface, at a considerable distance, which seemed to resemble the extended trunk of a pine-tree of moderate bulk. Its motion was so gentle and regular, that it continued parallel with the opposite banks of the river. We moved gently forward without taking much notice of it, having suffered but little interruption in our conversation. It now began to draw nearer, and seemed imperceptibly to be altering its direction, and to point the foremost end towards the bank on which we stood. We immediately stopped to consider it more attentively, when, to our astonishment, we found that it was an enormous serpent, that had been dead some time, for its body was stiff and motionless, its eyes were closed, its huge forked tongue was hanging out of its mouth and yielding to the ceaseless undulation of the water. While we were thus viewing it with calm and undisturbed attention, in a moment it coiled and sprung like lightning towards us. My poor friend fled, and I saw him no more. I had scarce time even to cry out, "Lord Jesus;" for the sense of my danger was so great that I instantly swooned and fell to the earth. On coming to myself I looked up to

heaven, and languidly raising myself with awful apprehension, from the ground, I perceived that this horrid monster had been struck dead by some invisible power, and I beheld its hideous form extended at full length on the brink of the river. And thus I was miraculously saved from instant destruction.

I awoke with transports of gratitude to my great Deliverer, my hope was enlivened, and my faith strengthened and confirmed. Two important discoveries were made to me at this time : first, that I should be exposed to the most subtle and dreadful attacks of my adversary, the old serpent ; and secondly, that I should be finally victorious over him, and that all his cruel rage and subtlety should be frustrated by the power of God. All which accordingly came to pass.

One great help to me was the forming an acquaintance with a select number of studious friends in different parts of the University. We frequently met at each other's rooms, where our time was agreeably and profitably spent in a way that was calculated to promote our future usefulness. And with these, who were superior to the fear of man, we frequently joined in prayer. It was in conversation with one of these gentlemen, that I first saw the advantage of attempting to unite precision and accuracy of thought, and elegance of sentiment, with the ease and freedom of common conversation : a practice of considerable

importance to those who are called to public stations in life. In this way a man may imperceptibly acquire a habit of delivering his sentiments with freedom and ease, with copiousness and energy, on any occasion whatever.

We had one gentleman added to our number from a neighbouring college in a remarkable way, whose recovery from a state of the most profligate and ruinous dissipation deserves to be mentioned briefly. Though little more than twenty-three years of age, he had been accustomed to excesses of every kind ; which in some instances had been carried to an alarming height. He once told me that he had been inflamed with wine, and in a state of intoxication, with but little intermission, for three weeks together. When I asked him, whether he had never felt any uneasiness or remorse on account of it, he said that he was perfectly miserable at intervals, particularly when the morning light returned, which occasioned some painful reflections on his mind darkened with guilt. But these fits of remorse were of short duration, and by reiterated dissipation his heart became more hardened. In the interim one of the college died, whose funeral, as is usual on those occasions, was attended by the whole society. At the time in which the procession began, he was in a state of confusion ; but as he was following the corps some awful and alarming thoughts rushed in upon his mind, with a force that he could not resist.

His conscience was alarmed at the thought of dying in his present circumstances, and he began to form some hasty resolutions of amendment. He proceeded a few steps in this thoughtful and serious frame of mind, when happening to strike one of his feet with violence against a stone, he was instantly seized with such an indecent fit of laughter that every thing serious was at an end, and, returning the miserable captive of sin and folly, he sunk deeper than ever into the snare of the devil. But is any thing too hard for God? I lived to see this very man become one of the most temperate and abstemious persons in the world.

Happening one day to be walking out with a few friends, we met this gentleman; and one of them having a slight knowledge of him, they stopped and exchanged a few words together: on this occasion I first spoke to him. I shortly after sent him an invitation to Edmund-Hall, which he accepted. Two or three serious young men of our company were present, to whom I had previously disclosed the design which I had in view, which was, if possible, to draw him off, by insensible degrees, from those dangerous connexions which had been his ruin. After some free and general conversation had taken place, I dropped an intimation to him, that some few of us had formed a plan for our mutual advantage, which we carefully pursued when we met together; and

that, if it were not disagreeable to him, we would proceed in our usual way. He instantly acquiesced, and we pursued our plan of reading alternately; and at length we requested this gentleman to take the book. He did so, and as the subject was history, we paused at intervals, and made some reflections on God and his providence,—the different characters of men,—the various services that they might render to society, &c. Though he said but little, it was evident that he approved of the manner in which we were proceeding. He regretted that he had so long been accustomed to negligence in his studies and to dissipation, which created a perpetual restlessness, so that not without difficulty he could keep his attention fixed to any thing. Before he took leave he gave us a very cordial invitation to come and see him. After many civilities had been exchanged, and several interviews had taken place, we perceived that he began to form some plans with a view to resume his studies, and that there was a gradual alteration in his air and manner, which became more calm and recollected. He often dropped intimations of the happiness of those who were not enslaved to their passions, nor entangled in hurtful connexions. In the mean time we ceased not to remember him before God in prayer; and as his intercourse with us became more frequent, we encouraged him to expect deliverance, and assured him that he would

find the grace of God sufficient for him. He was prevailed on, at length, to join in prayer with us; and a deep sense of his corruption, guilt, and wretchedness was given him by the Spirit of God, and he began to loathe himself, and to repent as in dust and ashes. This inward conviction in process of time became very deep. It was well that his constitution was naturally vigorous; for he became so indignant against himself on account of his former excesses, that he would scarcely allow himself sufficient food to sustain life. He withdrew from his acquaintances; would not leave his rooms but to attend the chapel or his Tutor; and spent his time in reading, retirement, and prayer. He persevered so rigorously in his plan that we were obliged to exert all our influence to keep him from going to extremes.

He was afterwards brought into a happier state of soul, in which he was enabled to behold God in Christ reconciled. We witnessed with gratitude and pleasure the change wrought in his views, sentiments, principles, and whole deportment; and I have often heard him, with great sincerity and fervour, pour out his soul to God as his Father. Thus it pleased God to add one to our number to strengthen our hands, in a very gracious and unexpected manner.

While we were proceeding thus in our endeavours for the good of others, some of the enemies of religion began to threaten us with great things.

But the all-seeing eye of God continued to watch over us, and they were not permitted to hurt a hair of our head.

In 1781 my situation in the University underwent some change, as the providence of God removed me, after a residence of about two years, from Edmund-Hall to Hertford-College. Having been informed that there were two studentships vacant in this college, from which, by the founder's statutes, the Fellows are to be elected, I made an application to the Principal, and obtained one of them. I soon prevailed on Mr. Roquet, a Commoner of Magdalen-Hall, to apply for the other studentship, in which application he succeeded. Thus it pleased God to give me a friend to sojourn with me, in this strange land, from whose presence and conversation I received additional strength and comfort. Here I likewise met with a descendant of that ornament of the Reformation, Bernard Gilpin; but he possessed neither the spirit nor piety of his venerable ancestor.

I had now a continued warfare to maintain, yet I had little reason to complain; for I constantly found that promise fulfilled, "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be." No man can walk in the narrow way, or be a follower of the crucified Jesus, without exposing himself to many difficulties, or bringing on himself persecution for righteousness' sake, in some form or other. He that

hopes to be a witness for Jesus, without bearing the cross, is either a child in experience, or has suffered his mind to be in some measure perverted from the simplicity and purity of the Gospel.

As the time of my examination for the first degree of Bachelor of Arts was drawing near, I was anxious to pass it in a manner that might satisfy my own conscience ; for I knew that I should be examined upon oath. This was a weighty consideration. I therefore made it a matter of continual and solemn prayer to God, that he would be pleased to assist my endeavours, and enable me to discharge my duty in such a manner that I might bring no reproach upon my profession. And I think but few instances have occurred in my whole life, in which I have ever witnessed a more clear and express answer to prayer. A gentleman of Edmund-Hall desired to be examined with me. He was an old friend, and a man of talents and application. He had a large share of animal spirits, and was much elated before the time came. I confess I was rather pained to see him quite airy and confident of doing justice to himself, and of satisfying his examiners. We both met at the time appointed, in the schools appropriated for business of this kind. He desired that I might pass my examination first : to this I consented. My mind, full of calmness and serenity, was fully possessed by Him whose presence fills heaven and earth.

This gave me a calmness and recollection that was much in my favour. They first examined me in Greek and Latin, which I went through with clearness and precision. The examiners then proceeded to propose various questions in the liberal arts, which they continued for a considerable time; to all which I was enabled to answer with clearness and promptitude. The senior master then gave me a polite intimation in Latin, that they were perfectly satisfied. I then descended and resigned my situation to my friend. He read the passages that were pointed out to him in the classics, without any apparent embarrassment. When the books were closed, and the gentlemen began to propose questions to him in Latin, he was so confused that he appeared sometimes not to understand them, and they were obliged frequently to repeat them. His answers were occasionally, indeed, correct; but it was apparent that his recollection often forsook him, and the blushes on his cheeks bore witness to the inward confusion of his mind. Not that he had any reason to blush for any thing but his undue confidence; for few men were better prepared: but a painful degree of humiliation was necessary for his future profit.

My future vacations were, from this time, spent in London, where I expected to enjoy many advantages. I was particularly desirous of being near Mr. Wesley, and earnestly longed to partici-

pate of the privileges which were enjoyed by the people of God. I requested him to recommend some pious family to me, in the neighbourhood of the new chapel, with whom I might lodge and board. He instantly fixed on my good old friend Mr. George Clarke, who then resided in Worship-street. In this family, which consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Clarke, Mrs. Cayley, and myself, I saw nothing but that order, harmony, and happiness which the religion of Jesus inspires. Here I spent much profitable time with those who were acquainted with the deep things of God. Mr. Wesley also frequently took me with him, when he went to visit the sick, and introduced me to some of the most excellent persons in his society. At the same time he gave me much excellent advice with respect to my studies. I proceeded now with more vigour, and attained greater strength of soul, and true inward liberty.

I returned with alacrity, early in 1782, to Oxford, in order to forward my business there, and in the Act term took the degree of Bachelor of Arts ; after which I lost no time, but proceeded to prepare for the degree of Master of Arts, which I took about three years afterwards.

In the autumn Mr. Wesley favoured me with a visit at Hertford-College. I invited seven or eight gentlemen from different parts of the University to meet him, who were delighted with his venerable spirit, and his courteous, easy, and

interesting conversation. A little before seven we accompanied him to his chapel, through the heart of the University, which was crowded with hundreds of gownsmen of various ranks and degrees; many of whom surveyed us with the minutest attention, and some followed at a distance, while others ventured to make part of the congregation. At our request, the next morning he preached on Christian prudence. This discourse was marked with his usual accuracy and precision. In the course of it Christian and worldly prudence were finely discriminated and contrasted in a forcible manner. This I am well assured was a word in season to several of the serious young students who were present. We then returned to breakfast with him; and when we were constrained to part with him, it was with a little of that regret with which young Elisha was parted from Elijah.

During my residence at Oxford, I was sometimes present at the discussion of some questions that were of an intricate nature. This was afterwards of advantage to me, as the providence of God has, on various occasions, permitted men of infidel principles to be thrown in my way.

Many inquiries also took place among us, with respect to the evidences of revelation in general, and of Christianity in particular. Though I had long had a rational conviction of the authenticity and divine authority of the Scriptures, yet my

own mind was chiefly confirmed by considering a fact which I had often witnessed; namely, that the greatest truths contained in the oracles of God are written on the hearts of believers, and are visible, to every spiritual and discerning person, in their lives: this argument, the whole force of which I felt, answered every malignant objection that the enemy could suggest. With respect to the nature of the pastoral office and its various duties, they were seldom out of my thoughts. On this subject, and that which is intimately connected with it,—the evidences of a call to the sacred ministry,—I read, prayed, and thought much. The latter appeared so momentous, that I could not rest till I had obtained some tolerable satisfaction with respect to what is implied in being called of God, and “moved by the Holy Ghost,” to undertake this solemn office. After I had viewed the question in different points of light, I could no longer doubt but that such a call must necessarily imply,—

First, The being furnished with some tolerable degree of ministerial gifts; such as clearness of apprehension, soundness of judgment, and an ability to reason with closeness, and to deliver one’s sentiments with distinctness, propriety, and energy.

Secondly, A sincere and earnest desire to undertake the blessed work with a single eye to the glory of God, and from a deep conviction of

the worth of immortal souls, and a principle of fervent love to the Redeemer.

Thirdly, A fixed determination, by the grace of God, faithfully to persevere in the blessed work, under whatever difficulties or discouragements might be thrown in the way; being determined to sacrifice the love of ease, reputation, interest, or whatever men hold most dear, whenever called to it by Divine Providence, so that the Gospel might be preached in its power and purity, and the Lord Jesus magnified in us by life and by death. And,

Fourthly, Considering that the great end of the Gospel ministry is to win souls to Jesus, and to make men wise unto salvation,—a work which can only be effected by the co-operation of the eternal Spirit, and the almighty power of God,—his servants must ever retain a deep and lowly sense of their great unworthiness, and absolute dependence upon him, all their sufficiency being of God, without whom they are unable to discharge any part of their work aright. Hence, all who are called to this work are required to renounce their own wisdom, their own strength, their own sufficiency, and to be ever looking up to heaven for the gracious and powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, while they carefully follow the leadings of Providence, and the express declarations of the word of God.

Fifthly, As no man can reasonably be supposed to teach others that which he does not himself

understand ; and as the religion of Jesus cannot be learned from books like other sciences,—for no man can attain to this knowledge, except he be taught of God, and enlightened by the Spirit ; it therefore is indispensably necessary for those who undertake to teach the mysteries of our Lord's kingdom to others, to be themselves first brought to a personal and an experimental acquaintance with them, and of a work of grace in their own hearts. And,

Lastly, As our Lord requires that his servants should be patterns and ensamples to the flock of God ; so a holy and circumspect conversation, a meek and benevolent spirit, and a life conformed to the divine principles of the Gospel, must doubtless take place, in a greater or less degree, in all those who are truly called of God to the ministry. Neither will any who are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take this office and ministry upon them, judge any of the preceding requisitions harsh or unreasonable. For though they may appear hard to flesh and blood, they will be made easy to him whom the love of Christ constrains, and who has the true spirit of the Gospel ministry.

After much self-examination and prayer before the heart-searching God, it appeared that he had wrought a willingness in my soul to subscribe to every condition that could be suggested by reason, conscience, or revelation, and I felt no reluct-

ance whatever to live under the habitual influence of those solemn obligations, whenever it might please God in his providence to call me to the work.

In the fall of the year, the prospect of returning to my friends in London filled my soul with comfort and joy. The winter of 1782 was crowned with a profusion of spiritual blessings. Never did I enjoy a more habitual sense of the divine presence and blessing; and perhaps I never was enabled to walk more circumspectly in my whole life, being continually employed in watchfulness and prayer. My soul pressed with vigour towards the mark for the prize of my high calling of God in Christ Jesus. I sought incessantly, and at length I obtained, a larger baptism of the Spirit. My days and nights passed swiftly in communion with God. I found that sleep was no impediment to the Divine Spirit, who can with infinite ease communicate his gracious influences to the souls of men in the time of rest and suspended sensation, and with no less power and sovereign efficacy, than when the organs of sense are impressed with outward objects, and the soul and body are united in a state of continued activity.

I have often found that one display of the divine goodness has been the forerunner of another. Thus it was in the present instance. For early in the ensuing year, 1783, I received a

providential call to labour amongst a people who had enjoyed, for half a century, the light of the Gospel, and been favoured with the ministry of Mr. Perronet, a Pastor venerable for his piety and faithful labours in the vineyard of his Lord. But as the Clergyman who was then Curate to Mr. Perronet stood engaged to him for some months longer, I thought it most advisable to return to Oxford, and spend the interval in forwarding my business for the degree of Master of Arts; to which I accordingly succeeded about two years after, at the time fixed by the statutes of the University.

CHAPTER IV.

THE time was now approaching in which I was to appear as a candidate for the sacred office, before the Archbishop of Canterbury, in whose jurisdiction the parish of Shoreham lay. I had heard much of the difficulties which some excellent men had to encounter in similar circumstances, and was in some measure prepared to meet them; at the same time I was not wholly divested of painful apprehensions. The providence of God, however, dealt tenderly with me, in this respect. He that had hitherto pointed out my way, made every thing plain and easy to

me. I found the Primate much more gentle and unassuming in his manners, than men of far inferior stations. As the Archbishop was but just come to the see of Canterbury, he did not hold an Ordination at this season, but he very readily and obligingly furnished me with letters dimissory to the Bishop of Lincoln, by whom I was soon after admitted to Deacon's orders.

Dr. Lort, the late Greek Professor in the University of Cambridge, previously examined me by order of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This gentleman behaved with much politeness and good nature. After some general inquiries respecting the college to which I belonged, the time of my residence, the course of my studies, &c., he took up a book, which lay before him, and fixing on two or three sentences in English, desired me to read them into Latin. This, as I had long been accustomed to speak and write that language, was neither difficult nor unpleasant.

After we had spent a short time in this way, he desired me to read the eighteenth of the Thirty-nine Articles to him. This Article consists of two propositions; in the first of which those are declared to be under an anathema, who shall presume to affirm that every man shall be saved by diligently framing his life according to the law or sect which he professes, and the light of nature: in the second, it affirms that the

holy Scriptures set before us the name of Jesus Christ, as that alone whereby we can be saved.

Dr. Lort asked me, if I did not think that there appeared to be an air of severity and uncharitableness in the first part of this Article, as it seemed to exclude from salvation, not only those that rejected the Gospel and substituted human inventions in its place, but likewise those who never had an opportunity of hearing the Gospel, and therefore were not equally culpable, towards whom, however, it seemed reasonable to suppose that the mercy and compassion of God should be extended.

I replied, that I apprehended the Reformers particularly directed the Article against those who lived in those countries which enjoyed the light of the Gospel, and who, nevertheless, presumed to disregard its authority, and to substitute either corrupt doctrines, or their own notions and opinions, in opposition to the revealed will of God. Against such men, I observed, who always unduly magnify the powers of reason, and the light of nature, the Scriptures themselves denounce the most dreadful threatenings, and the Apostle of the Gentiles in particular subjects them to an anathema.

But with respect to others, who had never heard the Gospel, they seemed to be nearly on a level with the Roman centurion mentioned in the Acts. To them therefore, I said, the reasoning

of the Apostle was undoubtedly applicable, that "in every nation, he that;" like Cornelius, "feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him : " Acts x. 35 : yet not for the merit of his own obedience or righteousness, but through the sacrifice and intercession of the Son of God. This, I added, seems to be clearly taught in Scripture, and to be affirmed in the latter part of the Article, which signifies, that it is by the name of Jesus only that men can be saved. His infinite merit, therefore, must be extended to all that sincerely seek life and salvation, in the way of righteousness, whether they have enjoyed an historical knowledge of the Gospel or not. This was the chief part of what passed on the present occasion. Dr. Lort seemed to acquiesce in these sentiments; for, on closing the book, he said he was of the same way of thinking.

He then put a Greek Testament into my hands, and asked me in what part we should begin to read : I replied that I had no choice, as the whole was equally agreeable to me. He then desired me to turn to the Epistle to the Ephesians, and proposed a variety of questions respecting the scope and design of the Epistle, the time in which it was written, the situation and circumstances of the people to whom it was directed, with some others of a very pertinent nature. After we had read about a sixth part of the Epistle, he turned towards me with a smile, and said, " Sir, this is

quite sufficient ; you need not go any further." He then conducted me to his library, and, furnishing me with every thing necessary, desired me to write my thoughts on a theological thesis, which he gave me, and intimated that it would be necessary to transcribe a fair copy for the inspection of the Archbishop. He then withdrew. In about an hour and an half Dr. Lort returned, and having read the paper which I had written, went with me to the Primate, who was, at this time, in Grosvenor-square, to whom he repeated all that had passed. His Grace, after the usual inquiries, said that he was perfectly satisfied ; and having read the paper, informed the Doctor that he approved of it. I was then ordered by the Secretary to attend at the Bishop of Lincoln's house, at two o'clock on Saturday afternoon, to receive some instructions previous to ordination. Several other candidates attended at this hour, with whom I subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles. We were then directed to attend at the Temple-church the following morning, at nine o'clock. i

After a calm and refreshing night, I arose with a mind deeply impressed with the importance of the work which lay before me. At the time appointed I proceeded to the Temple, on Sunday, June 15th, 1783, to take the vows of my God upon me. My heart was fixed ; and here, by one voluntary, deliberate, and irrevocable act, I devoted myself and my all to the service of my Redeemer, during the

residue of my days, to be employed in the work of the ministry ; an act which I have never had any reason to repent of for one moment ; and, at the recollection of my Lord's condescension and grace, I am in this hour filled with gratitude and love, while at the same time I am deeply humbled in reflecting, that the returns which I have made have been infinitely unworthy of his great goodness. As soon as the solemn service was over, I returned with two or three of my Christian friends into the city, and reached Spitalfields chapel in sufficient time to assist at the sacrament. In the afternoon I read prayers at Mr. Romaine's church, in the parish of St. Ann's, Blackfriars. Mr. Abdie preached, whose steady friendship I had enjoyed from my coming first to London, and whom, after an acquaintance of little short of twenty years, I find to possess much of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. The following day I was licensed, and about three months afterwards admitted at Lambeth by the Archbishop of Canterbury to full orders.

Having taken an affectionate leave of my friends in London, I went down to Shoreham, where the providence of God had now cast my lot. The face of the country was beautiful at this season of the year, and every thing was enlivened by a sense of the divine presence. The warmth and benevolence of Mr. Perronet's spirit delighted me ; and I soon perceived that it was his constant aim to diffuse happiness on all around him, by

the ease, cheerfulness, and sweetness of his demeanour.

On Sunday, June 23d, 1783, I preached twice in the parish church, and in the evening attended Mr. Perronet's ministry in the vicarage-house; after which I met the men's class, most of whom seemed truly alive to God. I was favoured with but few opportunities of hearing Mr. Perronet, as, from his great age, he was, soon after my coming to Shoreham, obliged to desist from preaching through increasing infirmities. It was then judged advisable for me to preach in the morning at the church, and in the evening in the house, and only to expound the Lessons in the afternoon service.

After I had considered the state of things a little, I thought it best to form a regular plan for my future proceeding, such as might be most useful to the people. I was soon led to appropriate the Lord's day morning to a series of discourses on subjects of acknowledged importance. I began with briefly stating the divine authority of the Scriptures, and the necessity of searching them in order to become wise to salvation. I preached next on the attributes and perfections of God; then on the creation of all things; the providential government of the world; on man in the state of innocence; on the fall; on man's redemption by the great and glorious Immanuel, or God incarnate; the offices of the Mediator; of the person, influences, and operations of the Holy Spirit; of

the terms of salvation in general ; of evangelical repentance ; of saving faith ; of the holiness and obedience required of believers, and their conformity to a crucified Jesus ; of death, and the separate state ; of the final state of the righteous and the wicked, at the consummation of all things.

I was enabled to complete my designs without any interruption from sickness or indisposition ; and I often found the eternal Spirit enlarging my views and assisting my endeavours, and I derived much profit and solid comfort to my own soul from having been led to adopt this method.

There were three schools in the parish, in the whole containing a considerable number of children. These I proposed to visit once a week, in order to explain to them the principles of religion with brevity, enforcing them with exhortation and prayer. The person who had the care of the poor consented to my preaching at the workhouse likewise once a week, which was well attended. The other afternoons were spent in visiting the people from house to house. And as some parts of the parish lay at a little distance from Shoreham, I devoted my Fridays to the people who resided on the neighbouring hills. Mr. Perronet, who possessed a large measure of the pastoral spirit, used on my returns to make diligent inquiries into the state of the people, in order to commend them to God in faith and prayer, which was his constant practice.

This plan I continued, without intermission, till, in consequence of his death, it pleased God to remove me to other parts of his vineyard.

It pleased God, in 1784, to visit the inhabitants of Shoreham with an infectious and most malignant fever. It rapidly spread from house to house, and wherever it came it generally was the harbinger of death. Most on whom it seized were sent to their everlasting home. In one family, consisting of the parents and three children, the mother sickened, and died in a few days. Her son, a man in full strength, and in the bloom of life, followed so swiftly that he was buried the same hour, in the same grave with his poor mother. His sister was then smitten, and was soon given over, but by a miracle she escaped. The king of terrors then aimed an unerring blow at her father, a poor, careless, ungodly man. His spirit was seen hovering over the invisible world; but a greater spectacle of horror, I think I never saw. He was seized with the agonies of an awakened conscience, as he lay speechless in the arms of death, groaning, trembling, covered with great drops of sweat, while his eyes were rolling with inexpressible anguish and dismay, which I perceived he durst not lift up to heaven. He continued in this awful state, perfectly sensible, for some hours. I have some faint hope, notwithstanding, that this poor creature was rescued, even in the jaws of death, from everlasting de-

struction. While he continued in this awful crisis, I was repeatedly sent for by those around him. The last time I was with him, I had much power with God to plead in his behalf, and faith seemed to be given me, to believe that God would have mercy upon him. It is remarkable that at this very instant his trembling ceased, and the wildness and horror of his countenance was succeeded by marks of inexpressible gratitude and astonishment, while his eyes were intensely fixed on heaven. In this state he continued till he expired. O that this soul, in the last day, may be found a monument of divine mercy, and of the riches of redeeming grace !

The Lord Jesus condescended in various other instances to own and bless my sincere endeavours to promote his glory, and the salvation of immortal souls. I was permitted to see several, who were brought to God during my residence amongst them, die in the Lord ; and to rejoice over others yet living, who continue to walk in his ways, and who are in the closest fellowship with his people ; with whom also I have reason to hope that I shall spend a blessed eternity. Sometimes the Saviour was pleased to bear up my hands by permitting me to know that the riches of his grace were communicated by my instrumentality to others, but often in such a way as to hide pride from man. I will mention an instance or two. After I had been there some time, a man who had been ac-

customed to come from one of the neighbouring parishes, to hear the word of life amongst Mr. Perronet's people, and who had been sorrowing after Christ for three years, one day, with a heart full of gratitude and respect, told me, that the Lord had given rest to his soul, under the first discourse that I delivered at Shoreham; and he added that he was enabled to walk in the light of God's countenance, and to hold fast his confidence. I well remember my feelings, at the time to which he alluded. It was a season of entire and humble dependence on the Lord Jesus; the spirit in which it best becomes his servants to be found, whether living or dying.

There was a poor family which lived on one of the western hills belonging to Shoreham, which I had often visited without any apparent success. Many a toilsome walk had I taken in hope of prevailing on them to give themselves up unto God. I exhorted them, gave them books, and prayed with them, but all apparently in vain. At length God was pleased to afflict the family. The poor woman fell into a deep decline. I now repeated my visits more frequently; and now it was that the truth of God began to spring up in her soul. She saw, and bewailed her undone condition, and lamented the carelessness and ungodliness of her past life. It was not long before she was made willing to be saved in God's own way. She strove to pray, but was often discouraged through a

sense of guilt, and through strong temptations to unbelief. God, however, was pleased secretly to support and encourage her. As she drew near death the work of the Spirit was more evident: her soul was earnestly engaged in seeking the Lord Jesus by night and by day. The Son of God at length came to her relief, and her soul was filled with divine peace and calm resignation. She committed herself and her family into the hands of God. I saw her a few hours before she expired, and found her possessed of an hope full of immortality. After I had commended her to God in prayer, and was just leaving the room, she fixed her dying eyes upon me, and then looking up to heaven, said, "The Lord Jesus bless you, Sir; you have been the means of saving my poor soul." This was about seven o'clock on a summer's evening, and before the morning her spirit was with the blessed in paradise.

How careful should we be to redeem and improve the golden opportunities which a gracious God is pleased to put into our hands, from time to time, considering the important end for which they are given us, and the great uncertainty of every thing here below! At a time when we had reason to hope, that Mr. Perronet's valuable life would be lengthened a little longer, he was unexpectedly taken to glory, on Monday, May 9th, 1785. His weakness, indeed, for a considerable while had been increasing; but a little before his

death he appeared to be better than usual. His cheerfulness was remarkable, and his communion with God seemed to be uninterrupted. The Spirit of God was poured out upon his people, and the Lord Jesus had vouchsafed his presence for some time in the ordinances, in a remarkable manner. Many found their souls to be brought near to Jesus, and watered with the dew of his heavenly grace, on Sunday, May 8th. In the close of the day, before the people withdrew to their own houses, Mr. Perronet saw and conversed with some of them, and blessed them in his usual manner. This was the last time; for, before the sun arose the next morning, his spirit had taken its everlasting flight.

Mr. Perronet was one of the most aged and venerable Ministers of Christ in the kingdom. He had been blessed with a strong constitution, and enjoyed an uncommon share of health during the whole of his life. His understanding, naturally vigorous and comprehensive, was furnished with a large fund of useful learning. His temper was frank and generous; and as he possessed much fire, vivacity, and cheerfulness, his conversation was very animated and instructive. Those who knew him will recollect, that he had much Christian courtesy, candour, and benevolence, and that he was given to hospitality. His piety was manly and exalted, and he constantly kept the great end of life in view, and manifestly directed all his ac-

tions to the glory of God and the good of mankind. In short, such was the fervour of his spirit, the simplicity of his manners, and the benevolence of his whole deportment, that it was impossible to approach him without feeling the respect and veneration that was due to his character.

The parishioners, soon after the death of Mr. Perronet, presented a petition to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, in whom the right of presentation was vested, with a view to obtain the living for his Curate,* a design which they had previously formed without his knowledge. And the manner in which it was first proposed to him for his concurrence was such, as deeply affected him with a sense of the goodness of God and the kindness and attachment of his friends. After a number of signatures had been obtained, it was delivered, by means of one of the principal families in Shoreham, to the Dean of Westminster, with whom an intimacy had long subsisted. The Dean immediately promised to lay it before the Chapter, and to give it his support.

The Chapter accordingly met shortly after, and the petition was duly presented; when one of the oldest Prebends arose, and strenuously asserted his right to the presentation in favour of an elder son, whose situation, at that time, stood in need of his assistance. This gentleman, therefore, was appointed to succeed the venerable Mr.

* Mr. Dickinson.

Perronet. But a more striking contrast could not have taken place.

Within little more than three months after the church of Christ had been deprived of Mr. Perro-net, she lost another of her choicest sons and noblest witnesses, by the death of that truly great and holy man, the late Rev. John Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley, in Shropshire. He possessed much originality of genius, and the choicest powers of reason : powers which he employed with uncommon success in piously maintaining the great distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel. The fervour of his soul filled his writings with strains of heavenly eloquence, in which we find the most important truths stated with clearness and precision, and embellished with a profusion of apt and beautiful figures and images, which were the offspring of a rich and glowing imagination. Though he was not a native of Britain, he wrote her language with a purity that has been rarely surpassed by any of her sons. But what raised him so high in the estimation of all that knew him, was that rich anointing from the Holy One, which so eminently rested upon him, not only in prayer, in preaching, and the solemn ministrations of the church militant, but likewise in his common conversation, and general intercourse with mankind. In short, he was a most illustrious instance of the power, grace, and salvation of the Lord Jesus in life and in death.

This mournful event filled the minds of thousands with sadness and concern. He had been the instrument of conveying many blessings to my own soul, and more I had reason to expect from him under God, when he was suddenly taken to glory. But why are we not more prepared to meet such solemn dispensations, so naturally to be expected in a world like this, the very constitution of which exposes us to sorrow, uncertainty, and chance? It would certainly be otherwise with us, were our faith in proper exercise, our lives hid with Christ in God, and our eye steadfastly fixed on heaven, our native country.

I continued to officiate some time longer in the parish, after the introduction of the new Incumbent; for I determined never to quit my charge, till the providence of God had clearly authorized me so to do. By the fall of the year, the new Vicar had met with a Curate more after his own heart. I now took leave of the people at Shoreham, who were much endeared to me; and having received a kind invitation from Daniel Agace, Esq., spent some time with him in London. While I continued with this gentleman, I received a very friendly letter from the Rev. Mr. Davenport, Vicar of Ratcliffe-upon-Trent, near Nottingham, intimating that he wished me to come and assist him in his parish. I spent two or three months with this gentleman and his family, in a

very agreeable manner, and preached and officiated during the whole of the time. It was a season of continued mercies, and we had many times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, in all the ordinances, both in public and private.

Early in the following spring, 1786, the Rev. Mr. Dodwell, a pious Clergyman in Lincolnshire, who often visited us at Ratcliffe, and with whom an intimacy soon took place, was desirous that I should come and reside with him, as he had the care of two large parishes, and, through continued indisposition, was scarcely able to do any duty at all. After I had considered the matter, and consulted Mr. Davenport, as it appeared to be the will of Providence, I went over to Grantham in Lincolnshire, where I was met by Mr. Dodwell, and immediately proceeded to Welby, of which he was the Rector, a parish about four miles distant from Grantham, between which and Stoke, near Coultersworth, I was constantly engaged till it pleased God to remove me to London. My fixed residence was at Stoke, from whence as soon as I had finished the morning service, I instantly took horse, and reached Welby in sufficient time to go through the afternoon service. As people from the neighbouring parishes often attended at Stoke, I received invitations from several of them to come and preach among them, which I accepted from time to time, as my other engagements would permit.

In the family in which I resided, we had morning prayer sufficiently early not to interfere with the time when the labourers went into the field, during the advance of spring and summer; many of whom continually attended, so that the house was nearly filled. I sometimes preached at a private house at Grantham, and still more frequently at Skillington, near Coulterworth, a neighbouring parish, within about a mile and a half of Stoke. Here I was much comforted amongst the pious and simple-hearted people belonging to that society, and particularly with the excellent Mrs. Christian and her family; one of the most devoted and sensible women with whom I ever conversed; a faithful follower of the crucified Jesus, whose spirit was taken to paradise a few years since by the Lord of glory.

It was my custom, from time to time, to inform Mr. Wesley of any thing that occurred of any consequence. In the month of March, 1786, I gave him an account of my own state, of the situation of the people, and of the manner in which the Lord was leading me on. In a few days I received an answer, full of encouragement, and which breathed a spirit of endearing and paternal kindness. This letter concluded with these remarkable words, "My dear brother, I think you should come nearer to your affectionate brother, John Wesley."

When I first read these words, I did not fully

understand them. I admired the amiable spirit which dictated them, but did not perceive, till after I had considered them more attentively, that they implied a wish that I should come into the Connexion. But, I was fully convinced, on reading them again, that this was Mr. Wesley's meaning. I was soon led into a train of serious reflections, and began to view the question in every point of light; and as I proceeded, prayer involuntarily mingled itself with calm deliberation and self-examination. What might be the gracious design of Providence, I could not tell, but I began to apprehend that my God was about to lead me in paths that I knew not. I doubted not but he would preserve me from taking any wrong step, because my soul earnestly desired to follow him, and to do his will, and I did not doubt but he himself would guide me by his counsel. At the same time, my heart was naturally attracted towards those whom I judged to be the people of the Most High, and towards that venerable man who had been the great instrument, under God, of beginning the present glorious revival of religion. I had indeed been trained up, from my youth, among the Methodists. After my first deep awakenings, I was soon taken into their society, and received an abundant increase of spiritual light and help by their means. I found peace with God amongst them, and had walked in close fellowship with them

for many years. My spirit was inseparably united to them wherever I came. I had repeatedly preached amongst them, and they had constantly strengthened my hands in God. I knew that the plan on which their societies were formed, was an imitation of the primitive church, during the three first centuries; and what was more than all, the holiness which I had witnessed in the lives of great numbers, in different parts of the kingdom, gave me an abiding conviction that God was with them of a truth.

When I had, for a considerable time, reflected on these and other considerations of a like weighty nature, I began to feel a strong and an increasing desire after a closer connexion with them. Looking up to heaven, my heart said, "Lord, I will follow thee. Only do thou point out the way. Thy people shall be my people, in time and in eternity, and their God shall be my God!"

I soon answered Mr. Wesley's letter, thanking him for the affectionate manner in which he appeared to interest himself for my happiness, assuring him that, with respect to the intimation with which he had concluded his letter, after much reflection and prayer, I felt a readiness to comply with the will of God, and that I waited for nothing but an opening in the order of Providence. In less than ten days I received another letter, informing me that he should be shortly in our neighbourhood, at Newark-on-Trent,

where he would be glad to see me, at Mr. Weaver's, a respectable member of his society. I went thither at the time fixed in the letter, in company with Mr. Dodwell. As soon as Mr. Wesley arrived and had saluted his friends, he took me up with him to his room. A conversation instantly took place on the subject of his letters. He asked me what I thought of the matter. I told him that I had calmly considered it in every point of light ; that I had covenanted with God to follow him wherever he should be pleased, from time to time, to point out my way ; that I had hitherto uniformly endeavoured to act in that manner ; that I had reason to believe I had been hitherto under his guidance and direction ; and that, in the present instance, I only waited for a providential opening. " Well then," said Mr. Wesley, " there is one just now before you. We want a pious Clergyman in London, and I have known you from the beginning. My brother is so feeble and low-spirited that he is hardly able to do any thing. I have therefore little or no dependence upon him. Mr. Richardson, another of our Clergymen, has been many years very infirm, and he is often so ill that he is not likely to continue long. Your way, therefore, is perfectly clear. There will moreover be a large sphere of usefulness for you, in the London Circuit : and I shall sometimes send you on journeys to other parts of the Connexion, to such

and such places." As the matter now seemed to proceed wholly from the Lord, I felt an entire acquiescence in his will. After the conversation had ended, Mr. Wesley spent some time in prayer, and then desired me to meet him in London, on the third Sunday in July, which he said he should spend there, in his way to the Conference at Bristol.

In this way did the providence of God introduce me to a new scene, the effects of which will be traced in the following chapter. On a review of the divine dispensations which have been recounted in the preceding pages, and which include an interval of little more than three years, how gracious and compassionate must the dealings of God with me appear to every pious and discerning mind ! How often did his grace support me in the time of trial ! How manifestly was my strength proportioned to my days ; and in how many instances was his pardoning mercy sent to my relief ! And how assuredly were all things made to work together for my good ! Some important advantages have I derived from the recollection of my Lord's dealings with me. I have hence learned to admire and adore him more fervently, for his goodness towards me ; to follow him more closely, and distrust my own heart more constantly, and to labour more assiduously to keep the great end of life in view.

CHAPTER V.

THE interval that took place between my last interview with Mr. Wesley in Lincolnshire, and my meeting him in London, according to appointment, was soon expired. For time appears to pass swiftly away, when the soul is actively engaged for God, and enabled, in any measure, to keep the great end of life in view.

Mr. Wesley reached London on Saturday, July 15th, 1786. I came to town a few days before him. The sight of him gave me much joy. He received me with great cordiality, furnished me with some kind advices, and desired, as Dr. Coke spent very little of his time in London, that I would occupy his rooms in the chapel-house. On Sunday, July 16th, I attended him in the morning at the New Chapel, where he preached to a very crowded congregation. I read prayers, and assisted in administering the Lord's supper. The number of communicants on this day was unusually great. Mr. Wesley computed them at more than a thousand. On the following night he preached at West-street chapel, and then immediately took coach for Bristol.

Soon after I began to reside stately in London, one of my first cares was to find out the most pious and spiritual persons in the society. I knew, much of my comfort would depend on

those who walked closely with God, and whose hopes were fixed on life eternal. Indeed, as in the fellowship of saints we often experience an earnest and foretaste of the happiness of heaven, so I shall always esteem communion with God's people next to communion with God himself. My good old friend, the late Mr. George Clarke, was very useful to me in this respect, and Mr. Wesley pointed out to me many others also, after his return to London in the fall of the year. Mr. Charles Wesley, indeed, with his usual shrewdness said, "Sir, you must not expect to find us angels. If you do, you will be disappointed." I found, however, many in London who were ornaments to their profession, and who would have deserved a place among the members of the first church at Jerusalem, when

"All were of one heart and soul,
And only love inspired the whole."

I knew, at the same time, that some allowance is to be made for persons dwelling in large cities, where temptations abound in a much greater degree than is usual in smaller places; especially incentives to the love of the world, and its pernicious attendants, the love of ease, honour, luxury, and sensuality. This is particularly the case in the capital of a great empire, where the most fatal and alluring snares are often thrown in the way of the most excellent and upright persons: from

the baneful effects of which those only can be preserved who cherish the grace of God in their hearts; who watch over themselves with holy jealousy; who love to hear plain and heart-searching doctrine; and who are nobly ambitious to trample the world under their feet; who persist, in short, with magnanimity to bear the cross of Christ, and refuse, on any consideration whatever, to quit the narrow path. In such cities, likewise, the pride of false philosophy often misleads thousands, while the ostentatious display of talents and learning misapplied perverts multitudes from the simplicity that is in Christ, and from a becoming regard to the ancient and venerable manner in which the Gospel was first preached. These and other considerations of a like kind constrained the great Apostle of the Gentiles to direct a faithful and heart-searching epistle, to the brethren who resided in the large and opulent city of Corinth; an epistle which, as himself testifies, was written, "with much affliction and anguish of heart," and "with many tears." Had the Apostle resided in London, he doubtless would have felt no less concern for the honour of his Lord, and the welfare of immortal souls.

As that part of the life of man which is spent in the service of the great God is most truly happy, so it commonly seems to pass most swiftly away. I now felt this to be the case in a great degree. My days, weeks, months, and years

were quickly gone, and time seemed to move more swiftly than before. I was employed almost incessantly either in preaching, or visiting the sick, in attending prayer-meetings, and, occasionally, classes and bands, love-feasts, watch-nights, quarterly-meetings, and in various other engagements of a similar kind. I generally found, on these occasions, a sense of the divine presence both in public and private. In striving, however, to pursue the plan which Mr. Wesley had laid down for me, I was frequently hurried on beyond my strength, which proved injurious to me in various instances. Sometimes, also, it pleased God to appoint the cross for my profit; which, however, he always enabled me to bear, and often made it light by a sense of his presence, and an assurance of his favour, which is better than life itself. Whatever trials were permitted to come upon me, and no situation can be exempted from them, his lovingkindness was never taken from me, nor did He ever suffer his truth to fail. The accomplishment of the promises in some instances was sudden and unexpected; and many were the blessings conferred upon me, in the course of Providence, by him who is the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation.

On April 30th, 1788, I was married to Miss Elizabeth Briggs, daughter of the late Mr. William Briggs, of London, and granddaughter to the Rev. Mr. Perronet. That venerable man had

often prayed that God would bless our union, and Mr. Fletcher, with a fervour of benevolence which was natural to him, in a letter which I received from him about three months before his death, had congratulated us upon the prospect that lay before us, and wished us all the help and comfort that himself had experienced in the marriage state. It is now between eleven and twelve years since our hands were joined together, during which time we have enjoyed an uninterrupted state of happiness. So kindly hath God dealt with us, even in this state of trial! We have had four children, three sons and one daughter; but as we were in no small danger of placing our affections too much upon them, it pleased God to take them to himself. One of them was permitted to stay with us about six months. His stay, though short, was sufficient to fill our hearts with anguish at parting with him. But though good children afford much comfort to their parents, they are certainly strong ties to earth, and afford no small anxiety to those who cannot but be deeply interested in their welfare.

As the providence of God had favoured me, on former occasions, with many important helps for the understanding of the sacred Scriptures, so they were, about this time, considerably increased; and the advantages which I derived from them, in process of time, were of such a nature, that I shall ever retain a grateful sense of the divine

goodness in this respect. I had, indeed, from my youth been accustomed to read the Bible with reverence. When I was brought to God, and obtained an experimental acquaintance with the Scriptures, I regarded them with increasing delight and veneration: and now, at length, I felt a fervent desire to approach still nearer to the fountain of living waters, and to contemplate more steadily and closely the majesty of divine truth. It will not, perhaps, be improper briefly to mention the manner in which I was led.

First, I read the Gospels in the order of an harmony, and traced the history of our Lord's life, miracles, discourses, sufferings, and death, in one regular and connected series. This presented me with a most delightful and comprehensive view of the evangelical history, with all its concomitant circumstances. In this manner many difficulties vanished, and those things which appeared obscure of themselves became easy, when considered in their proper connexion; and, above all, the sayings of Jesus were placed in a new and striking point of light.

The history of the first planting of the Christian church, and the labours of those apostolical men, recorded in the Acts, naturally opened the way to the understanding of the Epistles. And a review of these precious monuments of the faithfulness, power, and grace of the Lord Jesus, and the efficacy of his intercession in the first effusion

of the Holy Spirit upon the nations, not only animated and confirmed my own soul, but furnished me with several important subjects, which I trust were made effectual to the edification of others.

My attention was next particularly directed to the apostolical Epistles, and more especially to those of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, which are of the utmost importance to the church of God, not merely because they place the great doctrines of the Gospel in the clearest, strongest, and fullest point of light, and establish the close connexion that subsists between evangelical principles and universal holiness ; but, above all, because they furnish the best key to the interpretation of the writings of the Old Testament, which cannot be properly understood without them.

This appears most clearly and strikingly from the Epistle to the Romans ; and is more fully and copiously established by the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is a durable monument of divine truth, more precious than rubies, for it serves as a golden link, to connect the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian dispensations together, and manifests their perfect harmony. From these we learn that faith has ever been the grand principle of all true religion, and has been in fact, therefore, the same in substance throughout all ages. These inspired Epistles assure us that the faith of all true believers has ever been directed to the same

glorious and important objects. Faith in the perfections, providence, and promises of a covenant God, formed the religion of the Patriarchs and Prophets, and more especially faith in that great promise of a Deliverer, "in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed," him who is the Redeemer of all times, and the Saviour of all nations. Influenced by this faith, they lived as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and sought a city out of sight, a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. In hope of eternal life, and having respect to the recompence of reward, they voluntarily exposed themselves to cruel mockings, and scourgings, and the bitterest persecutions, not accepting deliverance; for they were divinely assured that they should thus obtain "a better resurrection."

These, and other considerations of a like nature, place the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations in a clear and interesting point of light, and, at the same time, they give a noble confirmation to the faith and hope of believers throughout all ages.

When the mind is properly furnished with these just, enlarged, and evangelical views, we may then proceed with advantage to consider what God was pleased to reveal in former ages, and the lively oracles which were delivered by all the holy Prophets which have been since the world began.

The order here seems to be inverted; but experience, which is the best guide, will prove the excellence and advantage of it. It is impossible to understand the writings of the Old Testament aright without the evangelical light derived from the New. Whoever steadily pursues this method will soon find that he is proceeding on sure ground. By far the greater part of the terms and phrases by which the new covenant blessings are described are derived from the law and the Prophets. The Divine Spirit which has explained and applied them to the covenant of grace in the New Testament, delivered them to his servants the Prophets for this very important end in the Old. Their clear, full, definite, and evangelical signification is naturally to be derived from a diligent comparison of the Apostles and Prophets, and of the writings of the Old and New Testaments together. Whoever studies the Scriptures in this manner will soon obtain a rich and noble fund of divine truth; and he will be led to understand and explain the Scriptures of the Old Testament in a much more spiritual, interesting, and evangelical manner than those who neglect, or but slightly attend to, it.

Such were the views with which I was impressed when I began to cultivate a more intimate acquaintance with the historical, prophetical, and other writings of the Old Testament. In reading

these, I found it best to proceed in the chronological order ; for, as this is the most natural, so it is certainly the most easy and accurate, way of proceeding. There are many helps with respect to chronology, in our own and other languages ; but not so with respect to analysis, although this is of vast importance in studying the Scriptures, and more especially necessary for the prophetical writings. The very accurate and elaborate analysis of Vitringa on Isaiah, and of Venema on Jeremiah, with a few others, are noble exceptions. Some assistance, however, may be obtained from our own countryman Dr. Smith, and from those learned foreigners, Carpzovius and Heidegger. In attending to a just analysis, I often found that some of the difficult passages in the Prophets became easy. Other difficulties, however, there were, that required all the help of the most pious and learned critics and commentators ; and after all some remained, of which neither the ancient versions nor the most sagacious or accomplished interpreters, either of ancient or modern times, could furnish any satisfactory or just solution. Perhaps this must be the case till the mystery of providence and grace be fully accomplished. I found, however, by experience, that I was engaged in a work that could not be accomplished without much time and labour. But here labour and toil were more pleasant than ease or relaxation, and the advan-

tages much more than counterbalanced all my labour and anxiety.

From the prophecies of the Old Testament and the predictions scattered up and down in the New, the transition to the mysterious book of the Revelation will appear proper and natural to all that have considered the subject. This wonderful book, which unfolds the volume of prophecy, and the great events connected with it, from the end of the Jewish polity and dispensation, to the consummation of all things, bears a very striking resemblance to the ancient Prophets ; and is full of allusions, images, and descriptions, borrowed from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel. Many things, as Bengelius observes, largely described by the Prophets, are here summarily repeated, and frequently in the same words. To them we may then usefully have recourse. Yet, notwithstanding the mysteries it contains, it is certain, as the same great man observes, that "this book is not only the sum and the key of all the prophecies which preceded, but likewise a supplement to them all ; the seals being closed before. Of consequence, it contains many particulars not revealed in any other part of Scripture."

I can never sufficiently adore that Providence which thus imperceptibly led me to a closer acquaintance with the word of God ; and which not only directed me, by various steps, to a method of

study which laid a sure foundation for the attainment of an accurate knowledge of those precious records of eternal truth ; but likewise furnished me with the most important helps, by putting into my hands some of the most valuable writers on different parts of the Old and New Testaments, which have flourished in different ages, either in our own or other nations. It is true that my attention was sometimes too much engrossed by these things, to the injury of my bodily health, and perhaps also the oppression of the powers of my mind ; yet I never could be satisfied without having my soul fed and nourished with the words of eternal life, without which, the study of the letter of Scripture is at best but a dry and barren speculation.

In the latter end of the year 1789, Mr. Wesley being desirous of knowing something of the real character and the religious opinions of the late Lord G—— G——, requested me to pay his Lordship a visit, he being then confined in Newgate. My friend Mr. Sauce obligingly accompanied me thither. We were conducted to the felons' side of Newgate, and ascending a considerable number of steps, at length, found his Lordship in the attic-story, in the room formerly occupied by the unfortunate Dr. Dodd.

On knocking at the door, we were presently admitted by a tall gentleman, of a pale and languid aspect and manner. His Lordship was

dressed in a light drab-coloured surtout, which was much faded and nearly thread-bare. His chin was ornamented with a short, irregular, pointed beard, which gave him a most dejected and plaintive appearance. We apologized for our intrusion, and informed him that we had waited upon him with Mr. Wesley's respects, who had heard with concern many things which had been reported, of an unfavourable kind, more especially with respect to his Lordship's religious opinions, which he hoped were ill-grounded. But we, therefore, should be happy to hear what his real opinions, with respect to revealed religion, were. His Lordship, who had hitherto appeared to speak with a great deal of caution, now began to throw off all reserve. Having expressed much respect for Mr. Wesley's character, and approbation of the good that he had done in the nation, he began to speak with frankness, and desired me to inform him, that he believed the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be of divine original; that our Lord had appeared according to the ancient predictions of the Jewish Prophets, in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, in Judea, and taught mankind the most sublime truths, and the most perfect system of religion and morals; that the circumstances of his doctrine, miracles, life, and death, had been faithfully recorded by the Evangelists; that in these we, as Christians, ought to turn our attention to the example of

Christ, which, in his opinion, we were scrupulously to follow in every respect, in order to obtain a perfect conformity to him. Thus, for instance, as our Lord was born in Judea, and conformed to Jewish customs, opinions, and manners, so we were bound to imitate his example in these things. "For this reason," added he, "I think it right to conform to his example in appearing as a Jew, and in maintaining an external conformity to his life and manners. These, Sir," said he, "are my real sentiments." We thanked him for the obliging and unreserved manner in which he had communicated them to us. Some miscellaneous conversation afterwards took place; and as we were rising to take leave of him, he desired me to give his compliments to Mr. Wesley, and tell him that he should be happy to see him. At the same time, he made many apologies for the poor manner in which he was obliged to accommodate those who did him the honour of calling upon him in his present situation.

We now took our leave, and he politely attended us to the staircase, and then withdrew. We were not a little gratified by his affability and openness, by which means we had obtained as much information as we wanted. I could not perceive any traits of uncommon eloquence in his conversation, nor any remarkable energy either of thought or sentiment. But much allowance was doubtless to be made for his present situation. I

am rather apprehensive, from the best view that I could form of his character, that he sometimes suffered himself to be misled by mistaken notions, and by following any sudden impressions or impulse of the mind, without considering the principles from whence such impressions might proceed, or the consequences that might follow. And thus, by a fervour of enthusiasm, he was led to undertake things which involved himself and others in many calamities.

Between four and five years had now elapsed since my first residence in London. This interval had been agreeably diversified by some occasional visits, which, by Mr. Wesley's direction, I had paid to some of the societies in different parts of the Connexion; particularly to Nottingham, Southampton, Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight, Chatham, Sheerness, and a few other places. These journeys were always profitable to my own soul, and generally conducive to my health and spirits. I was much strengthened by the mutual faith and love of my brethren in Christ, in different parts of the vineyard. My zeal for the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom was often inflamed, and I was animated and encouraged to press on towards the mark for the prize of my high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

I shall never forget one visit which I paid to the society at Nottingham, in the month of March, 1791, as it was attended with some circumstances

which tended to make a deep impression on my mind. Mr. Wesley, who was then in London, and had been occasionally indisposed, was thought to be a little better. The night before I left town, I called upon him, to take my leave of him. I found him alone in the dining-room of the new chapel-house in the City-road. His spirit and manner were, as usual, affectionate; but he appeared to me to be rather languid and feeble. In the course of conversation I asked him, if he had fixed his plan till the Conference. He immediately answered without reserve, "My way seems quite shut up. I know not, at present, how I shall proceed. We must follow the leadings of Providence in the best manner that we can." After I had continued with him for a little time, he commended me to God. I rose and took my leave of him, little suspecting that it would be the last time that I should ever see him here on earth.

I had not been long at Nottingham, before I received a letter from London, in which it was intimated that Mr. Wesley was confined at the chapel-house in the City-road, and that there was little hope of his recovery; but before I could reach London, he was numbered with the dead.

Thus did this great light, which had shone with celestial brightness for more than half a century, at length set in our hemisphere. Prophets and great men die like others; and though

mankind are often unwilling to part with them, yet it is but just that, when their warfare is accomplished, they should cease from their labours and enter into eternal rest. This chosen instrument of God, whose memory will be revered by the latest posterity, was richly furnished with gifts and endowments for the great work to which he was called. In his unwearied labours for the good of souls he manifested a zeal, disinterestedness, diligence, and perseverance, of which there have been but few instances in the history of mankind. The success which attended his efforts, and the rapidity with which the work advanced, clearly proved that he was under a divine direction. And as the Spirit was poured out from on high, grace and truth were suddenly and widely diffused amongst mankind. But as the great God ordinarily works by second causes, he was led from time to time to proceed in a wise and prudent manner, and to adopt the most probable and proper means for carrying on the work.

The plan on which he formed his societies was evidently calculated to give stability and permanence to the work ; and the manner in which he regulated them affords a strong evidence of his profound knowledge of human nature, and of the motives which have the strongest influence on the human heart. At the same time, he gave abundant proof that he well knew how to accom-

plish the most important ends by the most simple, easy, and efficacious means.

In the prosecution of his work he kept his eye steadily fixed on Scripture, reason, and experience, as well as the leadings of Providence, and the test of antiquity. Hence he proceeded with caution and security. He borrowed important light from every quarter, and selected whatever was most valuable from the writers of the Christian church, more especially in the three first centuries. This enabled him not only to defend the doctrines of Christianity from their most powerful enemies, but likewise to revive and defend many of the ancient practices of the primitive church. This was a fact which he never attempted to conceal; for he openly avowed it to all the world. In availing himself of what was most excellent in antiquity, he doubtless acted the part of a wise man. All the great reformers that preceded him, indeed, acted in the same manner, though they never carried matters so far, nor approached so near to the standard of primitive simplicity and purity as he did.

The rapidity with which he advanced in his work is not merely to be ascribed to his own vigilance, activity, or incredible labours, but to the power of God which wrought by him. To the same energy, and the wonderful co-operation of divine providence, we must ascribe the wide

and general diffusion of the great principles which he taught, guarded by the discipline which he enforced. Hence they extended not only to his own people, in the numerous societies which were formed in these nations, in Great Britain and Ireland, but likewise, crossing the Atlantic Ocean, actually established themselves in the western world. And wherever they extended, the triumphs of the Redeemer's grace were visible in the hearts and lives of thousands. And such was the nature of that edifice which he was the chief instrument in raising, that nothing but a departure from the first principles and spirit of the Methodists, and a neglect of their primitive discipline, can ever effect its ruin. The effect, therefore, of this great and salutary work will doubtless be witnessed by posterity, and it will afford matter of joy to future generations. His spirit, his conversation, and general deportment were suited to the dignity of his character; and the authority which he exercised, though sometimes great, yet was commonly tempered with mildness and condescension: and to his select friends he would unbosom himself, with the utmost confidence, and the most endearing familiarity. This representation of his character, though drawn with affection, nevertheless rests on facts that are well known, and fully established. And these facts will doubtless form the most durable and precious monument to his memory.

With regret I must now take leave of this great and good man, whose counsels directed me in some of the most important steps I ever took in life, and whom I regarded with the affection and reverence due to a father ; but the still higher regards which I owe to Him whose paternal providence has never ceased to watch over me, constrain me gratefully to acknowledge his great goodness, and to call to mind his past loving-kindness, some remarkable instances of which have been recorded in the present chapter.

The dispensations of divine Providence, which were always made subservient to the purposes of divine grace, while they gave a new direction to my life, and introduced a considerable change in my connexions and relations, were eminently calculated to promote my growth in grace, and in the knowledge and love of God. I feel emotions of gratitude in recalling to mind those dispensations, the salutary effects of which I feel to the present hour, and than which nothing could have more effectually conduced to my peace and happiness. It is true that a few painful things were sometimes permitted to befall me ; but these were always overruled for my good, and my soul was generally filled with joy and confidence in that God who condescended to vouchsafe me his approbation and smile. These therefore, like the transient showers which obscure the heavens in spring, soon passed away, and left a brighter sun-

shine upon my soul. Such crosses therefore as were laid upon me were, in fact, the greatest blessings in disguise. Their effects were to cut off my dependence on an arm of flesh ; to keep me dead to the world, and truly spiritual in my views and conversation. They likewise brought me to a closer acquaintance with my defects and imperfections : they constrained me to look to Him who is full of truth and grace, for wisdom, strength, righteousness, and salvation. In this way, the principle of divine life, that had been communicated from heaven, was kept alive within, and began to expand with divine energy, enabling me to deliver the truth as it is in Jesus in public, while I was constrained to watch over my spirit and deportment in private ; being graciously constrained in private to promote the glory of my Lord, and to further the good of souls, to the utmost of my power. How holy and circumspect should those be who are called to bear the vessels of the Lord ! May He who holdeth the stars in his right hand continue to influence and direct all their motions !

CHAPTER VI.

THOSE who have once tasted the sweetness of friendship, and enjoyed the advantages resulting

from the society of amiable and excellent persons, will severely feel the loss of their friends, and will regard it as an evil of no small magnitude. To such, human life will appear to be greatly impoverished, and stripped of more than half its joys, while a thousand sources of innocent delight and mutual advantage are failing, and the pleasant but uncertain streams of creature-comfort are miserably dried up. By a reflecting mind, however, such dispensations will be considered as full of profit and instruction; for they are doubtless intended to teach us many important lessons. They do, as it were, by a solemn voice from heaven, recall our attention to the Sovereign Good, and the Fountain-Head of life and of happiness. At the same time, they admonish us to beware of perishable and short-lived friendships; as such only as are founded on principles that are lasting and eternal are worthy the attention and regard of an immortal spirit.

These sentiments, the truth and importance of which I had learned by experience, were impressed on my mind by several instances which had occurred within the last eight or ten years, during which I had been repeatedly called to mourn the loss of many valuable friends who were justly dear to me. To these were added early in the year 1792, that excellent man, the late Rev. John Richardson, A.B., with whom I had often sweetly laboured in the fellowship of the

Gospel, and to whom my spirit had, for a considerable time, been closely and affectionately united.

He was a man of many sorrows, and had been deeply exercised with affliction and temptation for many years ; and as he had been much in the furnace, so, in passing through it, his soul had been manifestly much refined. At the same time, he certainly possessed much of the spirit of Ephraim Syrus ; and though he affected not eloquence, yet the solemn, faithful, heart-felt discourses which he delivered, frequently enforced with many tears, made a deeper impression on the minds of his hearers than the most studied oratory could have done. His unaffected humility, the simplicity of his manners, and the general conformity of his spirit and conversation to the Gospel of Christ, could not fail to make him respected by all who knew how to prize real worth and solid piety. His death, as was natural to expect, was in perfect harmony with his life, full of calmness, resignation, and peace. By his particular desire, I performed the last sad office which one friend in a state of mortality can do for another. He was interred in the New-Chapel burying-ground, in the City-road, London, in the same tomb with Mr. Wesley, amidst the regret of many that knew and loved him, on Saturday, February 17th, 1792.

Time, which passes silently and imperceptibly

away, introduces many changes into the life of man. The dispensations of Providence, by which these are effected, clearly point to that higher state of being which the believer in Jesus hopes, ere long, to attain; and they ought to excite us to a more diligent and vigorous pursuit of heavenly wisdom. Many circumstances had, indeed, concurred to undermine a constitution naturally weak, and to diminish its resources. For some considerable time I had experienced a great change in my health, and the little strength with which I had been entrusted began sensibly to decline. It became therefore a matter of serious concern, and of no small importance, to consider how I might best improve the remains of a short and uncertain life. Various things were suggested to me from time to time, and some of them, indeed, impressed upon my mind with peculiar weight and energy. It will, perhaps, therefore be proper here to give some clear and distinct account of such as, from their nature and effects, appear to have proceeded from the Spirit of God, as they may be useful to others.

In the first place, the Holy Spirit frequently excited within me a deep conviction of the importance of maintaining a close and intimate walk with God, in public and private; and kindled a fervent desire after that blessedness which flows from the constant enjoyment of the sovereign good. This appeared not only to be

essential to the peace and prosperity of my own soul, and a privilege to which I was assuredly called by the Gospel ; but likewise as furnishing the most effectual help and encouragement in every attempt to do good to others.

It was, doubtless, the same good Spirit that, in the next place, caused me to watch over myself with holy jealousy, and to mourn over my many defects and imperfections, which were often made to pass in review before me. Yet he never suffered me to sorrow as one without hope, nor to give place to dejection, but animated my soul afresh, to press forward towards the mark for the prize of my high calling. He, at the same time, convinced me of the necessity of devoting much time to retirement, in order to become more solidly useful ; and reproved and punished me, by withdrawing his gracious influence; if I suffered myself to be deprived of this privilege by other avocations. And I was led unceasingly to pray for the unction of the Holy One, without which the Ministers of Christ can never hope to succeed in their labours, but all their ministrations in the church militant must be lifeless, barren, and unimpressive.

By the same divine light, I saw clearly that whosoever would profitably conduct the worship of God, or engage aright in public acts of prayer, adoration, and praise, or in publishing the truth as it is in Jesus to others, should themselves live

under a constant conviction of the need they have of nearness of access to God through Christ, and be habitually aspiring after much of the divine presence, much purity of heart, much spirituality, much fervour, and holy boldness. And where these are found in any tolerable degree, there the Lord will be worshipped, more or less, in the beauty of holiness; and there we have the greatest reason to believe that the souls of men, in general, will be most profited.

At the same time, in order to improve whatever opportunities it might please God to put into my hands, of making known his will to others, it appeared to be a matter of no small importance to pay a solicitous and an attentive regard to the choice of subjects for public preaching, more especially on the Lord's day, when mankind are commonly enabled to attend with more calmness and recollection to their eternal interests than at other seasons; and when the whole counsel of God, therefore, may be made known to them to the greatest advantage. These golden opportunities, in which men are providentially freed from the distractions of business, and the necessary cares of life, should be improved to the utmost by those who watch over the souls of men, and who are employed in promoting their everlasting welfare. Hence I saw the necessity of looking up to God continually for divine light and direction, entreating him by his Spirit to suggest such

subjects, and to direct my attention to such passages of Scripture, as might be most suitable to the various states of the people, and most effectually calculated, from time to time, to promote their spiritual profit.

In the course of reading and meditation, many passages occurred. Some of them, which were strongly impressed upon my mind, assumed a new aspect; and others struck my attention in a diversified point of light, and I discovered in them many precious truths, which before lay wholly concealed from my view. On some occasions, in searching the Scriptures, the number of striking and important passages seemed to multiply like the stars of heaven. This circumstance, which furnished a striking proof of their infinite depth and fulness, constrained me to adore Him who was the author of them.

The manner of treating the different subjects that were fixed upon from time to time next engaged my attention, as it appeared on various accounts to be of considerable importance. I saw the necessity of appropriating sufficient time for a distinct and minute examination of them, and for frequent meditation and prayer, that I might obtain sufficient light for the full discussion of them. Difficulties, indeed, sometimes arose, but, by perseverance and reiterated attempts, they were commonly surmounted; and the time that was thus spent was at once pleasant and pro-

fitable, and generally attended with considerable accessions of divine light and life. Providence had indeed graciously afforded me many important helps, for which I can never be sufficiently thankful ; and I gladly availed myself of them, particularly of the labours of the most eminent commentators, and other writers of our own nation, as well as of those which had arisen from time to time in the Reformed churches on the Continent. But here I desire, with becoming gratitude, to bear witness to a fact in which the Ministers of Christ are very deeply interested : I mean, the certainty of the promised influence of the Spirit, in comparison of which, all the assistance to be derived from the labours of mortal men ought only to be considered in a secondary and subordinate point of light ; a privilege which has constantly been regarded by the faithful witnesses of Jesus with the utmost reverence in every age, and is peculiarly necessary to give efficacy to this as well as the other parts of their ministerial labours. Happy, indeed, are those who accustom themselves to seek that divine light which shines immediately from heaven, and which is communicated to the soul that is devoutly engaged in waiting upon God ! At such seasons, He that formed the spirit of man within him sometimes condescends to assist its powers in an uncommon manner ; and the servants of God know by happy experience, that in this way

a thousand difficulties, which before obstructed their views, have suddenly vanished; the depths of the Scripture have been laid open before them, and the happiest and most effectual methods of proceeding in their blessed Master's work clearly and strongly pointed out. And I think we may venture to add, that such will naturally be led to treat their subjects in the most evangelical, practical, experimental, and heart-searching manner. And I may likewise observe, in some measure, from my own experience, that discourses which have been thus matured by thought and reflection, by meditation and prayer, and ennobled and sanctified by the divine influence, will commonly be delivered with fervency and energy, and with the power and demonstration of the Spirit.

In this way did He who teaches man to profit continue to lead and instruct me from time to time; for these things were repeatedly and solemnly impressed upon my mind, and I have reason to bless God for his condescension and goodness, in that their salutary influence has never wholly forsaken me to the present hour. Indeed, the more I proceeded in this blessed work, the more precious and glorious did the economy of our redemption and its divine Author appear. I remember once, in a public discourse, being struck so powerfully with a view of the importance of making the adorable Jesus the end of our conversation and preaching, "Jesus Christ

the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever," that I solemnly covenanted with God, that from thenceforward I would more explicitly, constantly, fully, and pointedly preach the Lord Jesus than ever; and that I would strive to exalt his glory and his grace to the utmost of my power, wherever I came.

Experience, which brings every thing to the test, soon convinced me of the many advantages that must result from walking in this way. I stood but in little need of confirmation, therefore, from any other quarter. Yet this was by no means wanting. I was well aware that the servants of God had been influenced in every age, more or less, by the same views, as they were under the guidance of the same Spirit.

The first witnesses of Jesus, in the primitive times, eminently excelled in an attention to these things; and reformers and martyrs have been forward to tread in their footsteps. How many things on this head might be adduced from the venerable author of "The Saints' Everlasting Rest." Bilney, Latimer, Leighton, and others, have left us many instructive and noble testimonies, which should animate us to live and walk in the Spirit, and excite in us an ardent desire that the Lord Jesus might be magnified in us by life and by death.

And since my present confinement, I have had an opportunity of considering many other

instances with which I formerly had but a slight acquaintance. I have met with several of a singular kind, in that excellent book, which was written by Fleming in the last century, under the title of "The Fulfilling of the Scripture." As that book is in but few hands, I will, at least, transcribe the testimony that he bears to that venerable servant of God, Mr. Robert Bruce, one of the first Reformers, and most eminent witnesses of pure and evangelical religion in the Church of Scotland. "Beside that blessed frame of spirit," says Mr. Fleming, "which appeared in the whole of his converse, he endeavoured, especially whensoever he was to appear in public as an ambassador of Jesus Christ, to have his spirit deeply impressed with the majesty of that God of whom he was to speak, and the high import it was of to the souls of men to have the mysteries of salvation unfolded unto them, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and power, without which, this preached Gospel, though in itself the word of life, will never prove the power of God to salvation. And, therefore, though he was known to take much pains in searching the Scripture, that he might know the mind of the Spirit of God, by comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and in preparing apposite matter for the edification of his hearers, which he durst not neglect, as knowing he was to speak of God, and afraid of the

curse threatened for doing his work negligently ; yet this was the least part of his preparation work. The main of his business lay in having his soul wrought up to some suitableness of frame for preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, and making manifest the mystery of the Gospel as he ought, that so his Master, by his service, might see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.

“And knowing that the success of preaching depended wholly upon the presence of God accompanying the dispensing of ordinances, his manner was to be much in prayer and supplication in private, before his appearance in public ; pouring forth his heart before God, and wrestling with him, not so much for assistance to the messenger, as the message.” It was on such an occasion that he was once overheard pleading with God in this pathetic language, “I protest I will not go, except thou go with me.” And it appeared in the issue, that he had obtained his suit, and prevailed for the blessing ; for we are informed that in an unusual manner, at this time, “he came in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ ; and his speech and his preaching were in such evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, that by the shining of his face, and a shower of divine influences, wherewith the word spoken was accompanied, it was easy for the hearers to perceive that he had been on the mount with God, and that he had indeed brought that God

whom he had met with in private into his mother's house, and into the chambers of her that conceived him."

"Nay, he preached ordinarily," continues Mr. Fleming, "with so much life and power, that it was evident to the hearers he was not alone in the work, but that in his strivings to persuade the things which did belong to the kingdom of God, and to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, he laboured thereunto, striving according to His working, who wrought in him mightily. For though he was no Boanerges, as to his voice, being of a slow and grave delivery; yet he spoke with so much authority and weight, (as becomes oracles of God,) that some of the most stout-hearted of his hearers were ordinarily made to tremble; and by having those doors which formerly had been bolted against Jesus Christ, as by an irresistible power, broken open, and the secrets of their hearts made manifest, they went away under convictions, carrying with them undeniable proofs of Christ speaking in him, and that God was with him of a truth."

The remark of Mr. Bruce, on a sermon delivered by Mr. Andrew Blair, a young man of great talents, who had lately entered on the ministry, was delivered with an air of frankness and penetration, that deserves to be remembered. The Preacher, finding that the venerable Mr. Bruce had been present, desired to have the judgment

of so great a man on what had been delivered. Truth, though courteous, disdains to flatter or deceive. "I found your sermon," said Mr. Bruce, "very much polished and digested," which indeed was easy to one of his parts, "but there is one thing I did miss in it, to wit, the Spirit of God: I found not that." This censure was so blessed to Mr. Blair, that he said he never should forget it. Mr. Fleming adds, that it made a deep impression upon him, and brought him acquainted with a point of great importance, namely, that it was something else to be a Minister of Jesus Christ, than to be a knowing and eloquent Preacher.

I must add, though briefly, a few words respecting the peaceful and blessed end of this holy man.

The morning before he died, his chief complaint being a weakness through the infirmities of age, he came to breakfast with his family. And having, as usual, taken one egg, he said to his daughter, "I think I am yet hungry; you may bring me another." As soon as he had uttered these words, instantly falling into a deep meditation, after having mused awhile he said, "Hold, daughter, hold: my Master calls me." With these words his sight failed him, whereupon he called for the Bible. But finding his sight gone, he said, "Find me the eighth chapter to the Romans, and set my finger on these words, 'I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels,

nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Now," said he, "is my finger upon them?" When they told him it was, "Now," said he, "God be with you, my children. I have breakfasted with you, and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night." Having said this, he instantly expired, and immediately entered into the joy of his Lord.

But I must now return from this digression, though pleasing and profitable. There is one thing more which I must not omit to mention in the last place, as it relates to another branch of duty, to which my attention was, at this time, particularly directed; I mean the improvement of Christian friendship, for the great ends for which it was at first instituted, by an habitual endeavour to promote the Christian temper, and the amiable and benevolent principles of the Gospel, in private conversation

Christian friendship, indeed, and all the social intercourse that occasionally takes place amongst the people of God, appeared to furnish a thousand noble opportunities for promoting their true interests, for augmenting the sources of their happiness, and enlarging their hearts by a generous diffusion of the purest and most exalted sympathy, benevolence, and joy. Here the ser-

vants of God may avail themselves of an easy and delightful method of enriching their understandings, by a mutual communication of the most valuable knowledge; and here, likewise, they may occasionally dwell on the wonders of creation, the dispensations of Providence, and the economy of redemption; while, at other times, they may survey the duties and privileges of Christian believers, and all the sacred relations and endearing charities of the Christian life.

It is impossible, however, to behold, without regret, the many artifices which are employed by the great adversary of God and man, to counteract these important and gracious ends. To these, and to a spirit of inattention, dissipation, and unwatchfulness, may be ascribed most of those evils which are so often complained of by serious persons, with respect to their social interviews. And indeed most of that heaviness and condemnation which is so frequently lamented by the children of God must undoubtedly arise from the same quarter. Hence, a talent for improving Christian conversation deserves the most serious attention, and diligent cultivation, by all the Ministers of Christ; as it is impossible to conceive how much good may be done, and evil prevented, in this way. And surely it cannot be doubted, but that God, who has appointed his servants to be the salt of the earth, and the lights of the world, will assist and prosper all their endeavours

to promote his glory, in this, as well as in other respects. At the same time, perhaps, it will be found, that the attainment of any thing like eminence in this branch of duty will require more qualifications, as well as more piety and spirituality, more zeal and diligence, than can easily be supposed by those who have not attentively considered the subject. But where there is any tolerable degree of good sense and solid piety, where divine knowledge is blended with true simplicity of heart, and an amiable and an obliging deportment, many other qualifications may well be dispensed with ; for the conversation of such a man will always be attended with pleasure and profit.

It is not difficult, however, to assign various reasons why many persons seldom or never excel herein. The principal, I think, are these :—the want of a sufficient fund of useful ideas to diversify and enrich conversation, in general : the want of continued watchfulness to give it a more elevated direction, when it sinks below the dignity of Christian friendship ;—the want of address in making natural, easy, and pleasant transitions from one topic to another ;—the want of animation to preserve it in full vigour, without which all who are present will soon lose their interest in it ;—the want of spirituality and heavenly-mindedness, so necessary to raise our own minds, as well as the minds of those with whom we con-

verse, from natural things and sensible objects, to those of a spiritual and divine nature;—the want of a single eye, and a steady and invariable aiming at the glory of God, and the edification of all present;—the want of prayer for the divine presence and influence, before Christian friends meet together;—and above all, the want of a continual sense of the presence of Him who teacheth man to profit; without whom all our efforts must be vain, and all our intercourse barren, lifeless, and unprofitable. However, we may rest assured, that, in all these instances, in which the divine presence and influence are devoutly sought, and attended to in any measure, there the blessing of God will certainly descend and crown the society of the faithful. And, doubtless, the great Father of angels and men must regard his dear children with complacency and delight, when their intercourse here on earth bears so strong a resemblance to that of the glorified saints in heaven. We shall now close the subject by remarking, that though the opportunities of this kind are certainly more frequent in the larger towns, and in great commercial cities, where the people of God are commonly more numerous, and their advantages, for general improvement, more considerable than in other places; yet, surely, wherever any part of the family of God is found, there the same divine spirit of wisdom, purity, and love, may be expected, and, consequently, all

that is most sacred and valuable in Christian friendship enjoyed.

I have now taken a view of the principal things which claimed so considerable a share of my time and attention in this part of my life. And I have found even the bare remembrance of them both pleasant and profitable. And the manner in which it pleased God to direct me, and to point out the path in which he would have me to walk, will ever excite gratitude in my heart. And with reason; for the more I was enabled to realize these views, and to walk in this way, the happier I was, and the more uniformly encouraged to keep the great end of life in view, and to press forward towards the mark and prize of my high calling. And I then found, as I had often done before, that the soul that thus walks in communion with God, and the obedience of faith, is best qualified, not only to discern and judge of the importance of spiritual things, but rightly to estimate the value of time, and its close and intimate connexion with eternity.

The following years, which were spent in a calm and uniform attention to the duties of my calling, were not diversified by any remarkable occurrences. Their silent course, however, was marked by the regular care of a paternal Providence, which showered down many blessings upon me, and, as in former years, the rich and unmerited grace of the Lord Jesus was made to

abound towards me. The principal variations which arose were such as took place in the course of my studies; and as I have reason to believe that some of them were providentially directed, it may not be improper to give some account of them in the subsequent chapter, and the rather as they relate to subjects of an important and interesting nature.

CHAPTER VII.

A GENTLEMAN of considerable acuteness, having, in 1794, stated some difficulties to me in writing, respecting the immortality of the soul, and the evidences of a future state of rewards and punishments, I devoted as much of my leisure time as possible to an inquiry into these two important points, on the truth and certainty of which, not only all the solemn obligations of religion rest, but likewise all the hopes of future happiness which are cherished by good men ultimately depend. As this gentleman was of a very speculative and reasoning temper, I thought it necessary to take a general view of the evidence that might be deduced both from reason and revelation, and I found the whole amount to be considerable indeed. As he was likewise a great admirer of the author of "The Divine Legation

of Moses," and other writers, whose misapplied genius and learning have a natural tendency to impress the minds of their readers with mistaken notions of Revelation, so his views, by a natural consequence, appeared to have been much perplexed, and his confidence lessened in these two great articles of faith.

It is certain that some of the ancient philosophers had some just and striking thoughts with respect to the immortality of the soul, and a future state; and they have produced some very considerable arguments in support of them, which they have also employed on various occasions with much strength of reason, in order to enforce the duties of religion, and obedience to the laws. And as these have been justly considered as comprising the most valuable parts of their writings, so they may well deserve the attentive consideration even of Christian believers. But at the same time, the ancient philosophers appear so often to fluctuate between truth and error, light and darkness, and they so frequently relapse into a state of doubt and uncertainty, that it is truly distressing to observe the conflict that took place in their breasts. Nor did they, in general, attempt to conceal it. Hence, we learn from the writings of Plato, that Socrates, the wisest and best of them, had taught his disciples to think and speak with modesty and diffidence on this head. Thus, for instance, on the last day of his life, after he

had been answering some objections against the immortality of the soul, and the certainty of a future state, we find that one of his disciples made him the following reply :—"I am exactly of your opinion, Socrates, with respect to these things, that to discover the truth and certainty of them, in the present life, is either utterly impossible, or extremely difficult." And he shortly after subjoins, that it is our duty to employ every means in our power, in order to obtain satisfaction on these important points. But should these fail us, "then, amidst the various reasons and opinions which have been adopted by mankind, we should make choice of those that are best, and most probable, and trusting to these, proceed to accomplish the voyage of life, unless a safer and less dangerous method should be put in our power, in consequence of the discovery of truth from God himself." Concessions like these are made in the spirit of a true philosopher, and they deserve the attention of every sincere inquirer after truth; and while they reflect the highest honour upon Socrates and his first disciples, they, at the same time, prove in the strongest manner, the necessity of Revelation.

Happy, indeed, are those who have the clear and unerring light of Scripture, to direct their steps, and to confirm their faith in matters of such infinite moment, where the least doubt or uncertainty must alarm their fears, and fill their soul

with terrible apprehensions. It would, certainly, be very improper here to attempt to state the arguments that might be adduced from the oracles of God, or even the earliest writers, in favour of either the one or the other of these two fundamental points.* They must, however, of necessity, have ever been inseparably connected with all the various dispensations of religion, which God has been pleased to vouchsafe to mankind in the different ages of the world.

Of this fact, we may have sufficient evidence, if we but attentively examine the most ancient records of the Old Testament, where, with a moderate degree of penetration, we shall find that the doctrine then taught, in both these respects, was, in effect, the same with that which, in after ages, was more clearly and fully revealed by the Gospel of Christ. This is a point of real importance, on various accounts ; and, more especially, as the harmony of the divine dispensations is closely connected with it. Besides, had not this been the case, the faith of the ancient Patriarchs, Prophets, and other holy men of former ages, must have been erroneous and defective. They would have been deprived of some of the most powerful motives to a life of faith and holy obe-

* The reader is referred for satisfaction on this head, to Mr. Benson's "Remarks on Dr. Priestley's System of Materialism and Necessity," and to his "Essay towards the Proof of an Immortal Spirit in Man."

dience, had they not been assured that their souls were immortal, and that they should actually survive the dissolution of the body.

Nor are these conclusions to be regarded as the result of groundless speculations, but they will be found, upon a close examination, to be supported by solid and convincing arguments. And though they cannot be insisted upon with propriety in this place, yet some other opportunity may occur, in which the subject shall be resumed,* when a specimen shall be given of the proofs that may be adduced from the most ancient records of the Jewish church, with respect to these important truths, on which the interests of religion so much depend. On the other hand, the testimonies that might be cited in favour of the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments, are so numerous in the writings of the New Testament, so strong and decisive, that they need not here be particularly insisted on; and the rather, because they are more generally known, and, perhaps, better understood, than those which occur in the writings of the Old Testament. But, alas! what arguments or authorities are sufficient to convince those who are blinded by prejudice, clouded by unbelief, or enslaved by vice and sensuality?

In 1795 I was glad to improve an opportunity

* Mr. Dickinson began an Essay on this subject, but his increasing weakness did not permit him to finish it.

which was put into my hands, of taking a view of that noble Apology for Christianity which was written against Celsus, in the Benedictine edition of Origen's works. Here the truths of revealed religion are defended in the most able manner, and the disciples of Jesus vindicated from those cruel calumnies, and unjust and malignant insinuations, with which they have ever been oppressed by an evil world, with so much candour, politeness, perspicuity, and strength of reason, as must be sufficient to convince and persuade every mind that is open to conviction, and sincerely desirous of knowing the truth. At the same time, the affairs of the Christian church, its discipline and doctrines, are placed in a just and venerable point of light.

This served as a strong inducement to me to carry the search still farther into the writers of the primitive times. As I proceeded with the Epistles of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, and my acquaintance with the Apologies of Justin Martyr, and Tertullian, and with the writings of Cyprian, Eusebius, Lactantius, and some others increased, I saw clearly that the great essential doctrines of the Gospel might be pointed out, and the evidences of the power and grace of the Lord Jesus distinctly traced from age to age, notwithstanding the many changes that had, at different times, taken place in the state of the Christian church. It is true, indeed, that these

things are often expressed in a style and manner peculiar to themselves. This, however, is easily to be accounted for. As many of them were natives of Asia and Africa, like the oriental writers, they abound in highly metaphorical and figurative language, which is not so congenial to those who have been accustomed to the more temperate and cool manner of writing which has prevailed since the revival of literature in Europe.

And as the writings of the primitive fathers contain the great doctrines of the Gospel, so the account which they give us of the marvellous effects produced by them, in various instances, all perfectly agree with the word of God, and the characteristics of a genuine work of the Spirit, which has uniformly wrought the same miraculous and salutary change in the principles, views, hearts, and lives of men, in former ages, as at the present day. This, indeed, furnishes a noble and invincible argument in support of the truth and divinity of our most holy religion. Whoever attentively considers the accounts which are yet extant of the conversion of Justin Martyr, Cyprian of Carthage, Hilary of Poitiers, St. Austin, and some others, will soon be convinced of this fact. These, we find, were all persuaded of the darkness, corruption, and guilt of the human soul. They were all led to renounce themselves, and to bewail the vanity and wickedness of their

past lives. They were all enlightened and converted by the Spirit of God, through the grace and intercession of the Lord Jesus; and they describe the wonderful effects produced by the new birth in their hearts and lives, in so clear, strong, and satisfactory a manner, as proves that the work which was wrought within them was indeed of God.

But leaving those ancient times, and the pleasing speculations connected with them, my attention was afterwards engaged by a subject of a very different nature. I had observed with concern, for many years, the success with which the enemy of souls had been disseminating the most dangerous errors, and perverting the minds of men by various artifices, till at length the most wild, visionary, and unscriptural notions began to be propagated with as much zeal and assiduity in different parts of the kingdom, as if they had indeed been of divine original. Hence, many were turned aside from the faith once delivered to the saints, and ensnared by the fables of men, and the illusions of seducing spirits. This constrained me, in 1796, to spend some time in looking into the *Annals of Error*, a mirror in which the evils and corruptions of modern times are reflected, and from which they may easily be traced up to their source. And, indeed, it is very observable, that the seeds of most of the errors and corruptions which have since appeared

in the world, were sown by the old serpent, within little more than three or four centuries after the Gospel had first been promulgated to mankind.

Some writers, eminent for their piety and wisdom, have been at considerable pains in treating this subject. We find among them the venerable Irenæus, St. Augustin, and Theodoret. From these and other writers, it is evident to an attentive mind, that the most dangerous evils that have befallen the church of God have sprung from the pride of the carnal heart, and the presumptuous boldness of human reason; a self-righteous pharisaic spirit that refuses to submit to the righteousness of God; the vanity of false philosophy; the delusions of an heated imagination, imposed upon by the spirit of error; an enthusiastic contempt of useful knowledge, and a blamable neglect of our reasoning powers; and, in too many instances, a love of power and dominion; to which must be added, a base desire of uniting the world and Christ together. These, and other principles closely connected with them, have given birth to the most dangerous errors and delusions, which have diffused their poisonous influence throughout the world, and in succeeding ages proved fatal to the souls of men.

To attempt even a short review of them here would be incompatible with the limits necessa-

rily assigned us. Something, however, of this kind shall be reserved for another place,* as these things deserve some degree of attention from all who wish well to the interests of the church militant, and the Christian world is certainly deeply interested in them. Before we conclude this article, however, we shall just observe, that the authors of these evils have, in different ways, attacked the revealed will of God, and subverted the Gospel of Christ. Some have directed their enmity more immediately against the holy Scriptures, either against the Law and the Prophets, or the apostolical writings; admitting some parts, and rejecting others; undermining the authority, or questioning the sufficiency, of God's word. Others have vented blasphemous insinuations against the nature of God, the end and design of his works and dispensations; while others have attacked the different persons in the Divinity; and not a few in different ages have set themselves to oppose the infinite glory and eternal Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ. Man's fallen condition has been opposed by others, the need of divine grace, and the operations of the Holy Spirit; while the doctrine of the atonement, and of our justification by faith, has been uniformly resisted by the pharisaic and

* An Essay on this subject was also begun, but, being left unfinished by its pious Author, will not be given to the public.

self-righteous spirits of men in all ages and nations. On the other hand, the true nature and use of the Christian sacraments have been perverted by mystical refinements; and the general resurrection and final judgment have either been turned into mere allegories, or daringly trampled under foot, by the spirit of a proud and carnal philosophy. Such have been the attempts of the great adversary, to interrupt the great progress of the Gospel, and to prevent the souls of men from embracing the religion of Jesus in its power and purity. And, perhaps, something of this kind will be permitted till the end of time, in order to try the sincerity and other graces of believers, while their love to the truth, more especially, is brought to the test. But we are well assured, that the "trial of their faith, which is much more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of the Lord Jesus."

In the autumn of 1796 I had an unexpected opportunity of perusing many of the original letters of that great and good man, Philip Melancthon, who was, without doubt, one of the most pacific, amiable, and excellent of the Reformers. I was soon convinced, that the high reputation he had obtained in the Christian world, for his piety, wisdom, moderation, candour, and love of peace, was well founded. As I proceeded, I found so

much refined pleasure and instruction blended together, in the perusal of them ; so many fine sentiments, and useful observations on the conduct of human life ; so many curious particulars relating to the history of his own times, interspersed with so many reflections and motives tending to reconcile us to the will of God, and to bring us to a spirit of patience and resignation ; and, above all, so many ingenious and endearing arguments to enforce a love of mutual benevolence and forbearance, of peace and harmony, amongst Christian brethren : that I soon felt a strong desire springing up in my breast to communicate the pleasure and advantage I myself had derived from them to the rest of mankind ; and the rather, as I never understood that they had been published in our own language. And I could not help thinking, but that, in this manner, the glory of God would, in some measure, be promoted ; as it seemed hardly possible that any into whose hands these letters might fall should peruse them with any degree of attention, without feeling some increase of candour and benevolence, some powerful incentives to the love of God and man, and some strong inducements to promote the harmony and peace of the Christian church with all the zeal and assiduity in their power.

These and other considerations induced me to proceed, without delay, to the translation. I

had scarcely finished, however, more than two or three of his letters, before I was convinced that it would be absolutely necessary, from the many allusions with which they abounded to the circumstances of his own life, and the various stages of the Reformation, to draw up as circumstantial an account of the life of Melancthon as could be obtained at this distance of time ; and that in such a manner as might likewise comprise a clear and comprehensive view of the history of the Reformation, from its earliest dawn to its final and complete establishment.

Thus was I unexpectedly led to trace the footsteps of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, and the various methods so successively employed in accomplishing his great and salutary work : and my soul was often filled with astonishment and gratitude. I saw clearly that the same hand, which directed the first witnesses of Jesus in publishing the Gospel to mankind, was now manifestly leading these chosen instruments, which had been raised up at this critical juncture, and delivering them from those snares and dangers which were, in vain, employed by earth and hell, to circumvent and destroy them. The suddenness with which it broke out, the rapid and extensive manner in which it advanced, the heroic spirit of the Reformers ; their zeal, disinterestedness, and other endowments ; and the infatuation which so often attended the counsels and

designs of their enemies, all conspire to prove that the work was of God. And, indeed, from the effects which followed, it appeared to be worthy of him ; for the nations of Europe began once more to enjoy the light of the Gospel, after many ages of worse than heathenish darkness. The human soul received its liberty, and men began to shake off the ignominious chains of ignorance, error, and superstition, and to trample under foot the tyranny of Antichrist, by whom they had been so long enslaved.

While the Reformers were labouring to restore religion to its primitive purity, and to bring the worship of God back to its ancient simplicity, they discovered no small concern for the interests of learning and the revival of useful knowledge. And we are much indebted to them for their laborious attempts in founding schools and seminaries ; in endeavouring to make the attainment of useful knowledge more compendious and easy ; and in directing the studies of youth into those channels which might make them subservient to the good of mankind, and the welfare of the Christian church.* In endeavouring to accomplish which, Melancthon took a distinguished part. His zeal, his diligence, his exertions, in these respects, were almost incredible. But his chief care was to establish an intimate union betwixt learning and piety. The arts and sciences which invigorate and adorn the human mind,

and conduce so much to the dignity and comfort of life, are defective and pernicious without religion. On the other hand, those who embrace the Gospel of Christ, and yet neglect or despise useful knowledge, deprive themselves of many advantages, and fall into many absurdities, while they expose their religion to the derision of their enemies, and deprive themselves of some of the most powerful arguments by which it is supported.*

The pleasure and edification which I experienced, in considering the different circumstances which occurred in the life of this excellent man, were very considerable. His patience, his perseverance, his gentleness, his candour and benevolence, his piety, his humility, and the unaffected simplicity of his manners, afforded me continual lessons of instruction; while his sorrows and discouragements, which were very considerable, and which often caused him to weep bitterly, as the ambassadors of peace have ever done, sensibly affected my heart, and frequently drew the tears from my eyes. On the other hand, the succession of interesting incidents which took place during the Reformation, and the gradual disclo-

* The connexion which ought to subsist between learning and piety is a matter of great importance, and ought to be very seriously considered, as its influence will ever be considerable on society at large, as well as on individuals.

sure of the designs of Providence, during this eventful period, deeply convinced me of the love of God to his church, and the Redeemer's concern for the souls which he had purchased with his own blood.

After I had finished the Life of Melancthon, it was published in a periodical work, which has long been distinguished for its wide and extensive circulation, and its solid usefulness.*

The evidences of revealed religion, which had, at different times, occasioned the most serious concern in my heart, engaged my attention afresh in the spring and summer of the year 1798. The infidelity which had long been raging like a pestilence among the false philosophers and deluded people on the Continent, at length passed over to Great Britain, and soon infected a prodigious number of the inhabitants of this island. And what rendered the evil still more alarming was, that many unguarded persons in the religious world began to be moved from their stability, in consequence of their lending an ear to the subtle reasonings and poisonous insinuations of artful and wicked men, who were every where lying in wait to deceive unstable and unwary souls.

In the licentious age of Charles the second, libertinism and free-thinking, as it is termed, were principally confined to the great and noble ;

* The Methodist or Arminian Magazine.

while the middle and lower classes in society, in general, escaped the contagion of infidelity. The case was now quite reversed ; for the ravages of infidelity were awfully visible amongst the bulk of the people, nor was its rage restrained from youths or even children. The Scriptures were ridiculed, the facts misrepresented, the truth of the narratives called in question, the doctrines derided and blasphemed, and every attempt was made to undermine and destroy the authority of God's word, and its salutary influence on the souls of men.

When I had viewed these things for a considerable time, and the evil seemed rather to increase, the thought was suggested to my mind, that it might perhaps answer a valuable end, if the principal arguments that might be adduced in favour of Revelation were reduced to a narrow compass, arranged under a few general heads, and stated with precision, perspicuity, and energy ; as by this means persons of any tolerable capacity and love of the truth might easily judge for themselves, on what solid grounds our most holy religion stands, and might be fully convinced, by a compendious kind of demonstration, that the great truths contained in Scripture, on which believers rest their everlasting happiness, are indeed founded on a rock, which all the combined powers of earth and hell may attempt to shake in vain.

After I had considered the matter maturely, I thought the most effectual method to excite a just veneration for the sacred Scriptures would be to endeavour to establish their divine authority, by considering, briefly, the nature of the doctrines which they contain; the methods employed by divine wisdom to prove the credibility and certainty of the facts recorded in them, many of which are of the most stupendous kind;—by reviewing the accomplishment of the prophecies, some of which are marked with minute precision, and relate to individuals, while others extend to various ages and nations, and their truth is confirmed by comparing them with the most authentic historians, and with the past and present state of the world;—by marking the unparalleled harmony and connexion which prevail throughout the sacred writings;—and, lastly, by an attentive consideration of the wonderful efficacy attending the doctrines of Revelation, and their salutary influence on individuals and on mankind at large, in different ages and nations.

While I was engaged in the prosecution of my design, I had little reason to repent of the pains that were necessary in taking a nearer view of the evidences of Revelation than I had ever done before. I considered, with delight, the gradual progress of divine truth, from its first dawn, and its early communication from the Patriarchs and Prophets through successive ages, till at length

the Sun of Righteousness himself arose, and the earth was filled with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, and the sacred Scriptures were at length completed by the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists.

I was not less convinced of a divine interposition in the unparalleled harmony of the different writers, and the close and intimate connexion of all the parts of the Old and New Testament, than in the precise and continual accomplishment of so many illustrious prophecies, and the marvellous preservation of the sacred writings amidst the vicissitudes to which the affairs of men are liable, and the malignity of the most outrageous and powerful persecutors.

But what is the force of all the evidence in the world, when men are blinded by prejudice, or given up to a strong delusion to believe a lie? Surely those who allow themselves time to consider the sacred writings with that calmness and candour which a subject of so much importance requires, must soon be convinced that Revelation is supported by reason, and is perfectly worthy of God. How melancholy is the reflection, that so many, in different ages, should have either slighted or rejected this most precious gift of God! From what other quarter may we hope to find the "truth, without any mixture of error?" Why then is that divine book, which is calculated to make men so wise, so excellent and happy, so

ungratefully rejected by those who style themselves rational creatures? A better solution of this difficulty, perhaps, cannot be met with, than in the following pathetic words of a primitive writer :—"The truth we profess, we know to be a stranger upon earth, and she expects not friends in a strange land. But she came from heaven, and that is her native abode. One thing, indeed, this heavenly stranger pleads for in arrest of judgment, and it is only this,—that men would vouchsafe to understand her, before they condemn her."

Having thus given some account of the different pursuits, to which my attention was occasionally directed, during the period included in this part of the narrative, it begins now to be necessary to hasten towards a conclusion. Several instances have been selected of the manner in which, during the regular discharge of the other duties of my calling, my studies were diversified from time to time, in the course of Providence. I have only to subjoin a few remarks, which may tend to throw some further light on the dispensations of God towards me.

The state of my mind, during the whole of this period, underwent but few changes. My soul had been, for some years, habitually tending towards the sovereign good, as the only possible centre of rest. And there I was constrained to abide, both from necessity and choice. The dew from heaven often refreshed me when weary, and

the bread of life was sweet to my taste, and my soul was frequently led to cry out, with those of old, "Lord, evermore give us of this bread!" On various occasions, also, I found that promise remarkably fulfilled, "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be." I think I can likewise trace a gradual growing up into Christ, my living Head; whose person, attributes, titles, atonement, and intercession, were unspeakably precious to me, and became the frequent subject of my thoughts, my conversation, and prayer. And this, I trust, will be more and more the case to the days of eternity. For as he hath a name which is above every name, so no finite mind can ever comprehend, no tongue can declare, "how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty."

That adorable Providence, which now favoured me with many advantages to promote my growth in grace, furnished me, likewise, with many considerable helps for the further cultivation of the intellectual powers, and the prosecution of the studies peculiar to my profession, which have ever been the delight and joy of my life; and which, I trust, have not only been profitable to myself, but useful to others. Nor must I omit here, again, to bear testimony to a fact, which, I think, can scarcely be questioned without impiety; I mean, that God, who formed the human soul, sometimes graciously condescends to assist its powers, when they are sincerely employed in the pursuit of

truth. Something like this I have often experienced, more especially in the study of the Scriptures. Instances, indeed, of this kind have occurred so frequently, that I should have been senseless not to have observed them ; and ungrateful not to have recorded them.

At the same time, I must confess, on the other hand, that I have often had reason to complain of some hurtful consequences, which must ever arise from too intense an application even to the most useful studies. In this way my spirits have not only been exhausted, and my health impaired, but, what I least of all suspected, my communion with God has been occasionally interrupted, and the ardour of my soul insensibly damped. This is a sore evil to those who cannot live without the enjoyment of Him, whose favour is better than life. A complaint of this kind, however, has been but too common amongst pious students in every age. Even the holy Mr. Baxter lamented it, when considerably advanced in life. The best antidote that I have ever met with, is clearly and concisely pointed out by a very pious and judicious writer of the last century, in a piece which I shall endeavour to transcribe in its proper place, for the sake of those who may not otherwise have an opportunity of consulting it. I pray God that it may be as much blessed to others, as it has been to myself. *

* See the Appendix.

We have now taken a view of the principal particulars which occurred during the space of forty years, an important period in the short and uncertain life of man. Some considerable change in the scene may now be expected, the nature and circumstances of which, if it please God, I shall endeavour to lay before the reader in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

As I am now approaching to a period which will probably terminate the dispensations of God with me in the present life, and I may therefore be considered as steering a kind of middle course between the two worlds; before I take my everlasting flight, I would reflect a little on the ways of God with men, and adore him for that wisdom and goodness which have appeared in all his dealings with me, and the various manifestations of his power and love, which I have so often experienced during my state of trial here on earth.

If we look back on our past lives, it will generally be found that the leading facts, which gave a direction to all that followed, were not according to our own choice or knowledge, but from the hand of an overruling Providence, which acts without consulting us; putting us

into situations which are either best for ourselves, or best for the world, or best for both ; and leading us, as it led the patriarch Abraham ; of whom we are told, that he “knew not whither he was going.” Happy, indeed, is it for those who give themselves up to the guidance of their covenant God ! Such shall ever find him, as the patriarch did, their sun and shield, their exceeding great and eternal reward !

It is a source of unspeakable consolation to reflect, that the Son of God is possessed of all power in heaven and earth, as the Father hath delivered the government of the universe into his hands. All the acts of his providential government, therefore, are directed for the general good of his church and people. Believers may hence rest assured, that every thing that befalls them is under the control of an all-wise and an unerring hand. They often find themselves supported and delivered in a marvellous manner. The various trials, afflictions, and temptations to which they are exposed are made to answer the most valuable ends. The subtilty, power, and malice of their spiritual enemies are restrained and counteracted, and made to work together for their good. And their Lord often inspires them with inward vigour, peace, and joy, and with an assurance that, ere long, they shall be with him in everlasting glory.

It is likewise an instance of the goodness of

God, that we are often reminded of the uncertainty of human life, and its vicissitudes, by many striking images borrowed from the natural world, all which are calculated to excite us to the pursuit of heavenly wisdom. The unsubstantial vapours which arise, and are soon dispersed; the fleeting shadows of things, which are perpetually changing and disappearing; the grass of the earth, and the flowers of the field, afford striking images of the frail and uncertain life of man. The sun in the morning appears in the east, gradually ascends the vault of heaven, till at noon it reaches its meridian splendour. From thence it imperceptibly declines, till in the evening it sinks in the west, and then setting in one hemisphere instantly rises in another. Nor is the succession of the seasons less instructive. In spring, the infant bud of life appears, and the active and intellectual powers gradually expand themselves in childhood and youth. These are succeeded by more vigorous shoots, till man, at length, attains to maturity and strength. In the summer of life man flourishes; a season in which excellent persons, like the choicest trees and shrubs, give an earnest of increasing fruitfulness, of maturer reason, more valuable attainments, and more extensive usefulness. These delightful prospects are sometimes realized in autumn, when the fruits of the earth more copiously abound. A gradual change now comes on. A decay of

the powers of man actually takes place. The face of nature undergoes a great alteration. Winter threatens; it commences, proceeds irresistibly, and the scene is closed in death. These changes, however, with the just will be followed by other springs in a more genial climate, and seasons far more fruitful in holiness, wisdom, peace, and joy, in that celestial world, where every grace shall attain to full maturity and complete perfection.

The wisdom of God has thought proper to conceal from man the knowledge of futurity, and particularly that solemn hour in which the present life shall terminate, and his state be finally and everlastingly fixed. This, however, is intended to put us upon our guard, and will be of the utmost advantage to us, while we sit loose to the things of time and sense, and are waiting for the coming of our Lord. And are not all the dispensations of Providence and grace acting in sweet and divine harmony in order to accomplish this great end, and to make us wise indeed unto salvation? And if we listen to the voice of God, we shall find him daily calling us to a higher state of being, and to that happiness and glory which are at his right hand. A believer, therefore, should often ponder the dispensations which are proceeding from a gracious God, and should earnestly pray that the salutary ends intended by divine wisdom may be fully answered by them.

Such a conduct would, doubtless, be attended with many advantages. Those who call to mind the past lovingkindness of their God, and reflect a little on the returns which they have too often made for his condescension and goodness, will soon be filled with shame and confusion at the recollection of their own ways, and will appear little and vile in their own eyes. And while they are thus humbled and abased before God, they will be constrained to admire and adore the riches of his grace, which has been made so marvellously to abound towards them. Such, indeed, have been the effects produced by the preceding review of my past life, in which an attempt has been made to recite the dealings of God with me, and to record some of the principal dispensations of his providence and grace. And I should delight to enlarge still further on a theme which displays the wonders of his love, were I not constrained to resume the narrative. My soul shall, however, continue in secret to dwell upon his praise.

“Through every period of my life,
Thy goodness I'll pursue;
And after death, in distant worlds,
The pleasing theme renew.

“Through all eternity to thee
A grateful song I'll raise;
But O! eternity's too short,
To utter all thy praise.”

In the latter end of the year 1798 I was requested, towards the evening of a dreary and rainy day, to visit a sick person in the neighbourhood of Finsbury-square, who was supposed to be near death, as he appeared to be in the last stage of a virulent putrid fever. When I came into the room, which was crowded with several poor and afflicted persons, who all seemed to reside in it, a friend gave me some camphire, and desired me to be cautious while I was speaking to him. As he was very deaf, I was obliged to stand close to his bed, and frequently to put my mouth to his ear. I continued with him about half an hour; but before I had risen from my knees in prayer, I felt an unpleasant sensation in my stomach. This was much increased the next day, when I was seized with a strong degree of nausea, attended with faintness. I had, indeed, too much reason to apprehend that I had taken some degree of infection. As I immediately had recourse to various precautions, in the course of a few days the symptoms went off. It is very remarkable, however, that I never was well after this time. The attack seemed to co-operate with other causes to bring matters soon to a crisis, and to open the way for those disorders, from the violence of which I have suffered so much, though the seeds of them were, probably, several years in taking root.

In the winter I felt my strength sensibly

declining. I continued, however, to officiate, as usual at the different chapels, though not without some difficulty, till the following spring, 1799; when I unexpectedly seemed to revive, and be actually gaining a little ground. This, however, was of short continuance; for on Saturday, May 18th, I was suddenly attacked, towards the evening, with violent pains in my head, and a cold shivering all over my body. As I suspected that these might be the symptoms of approaching fever, I thought it advisable to my feet in warm water, and to take a gentle sweat. As soon as I had lain down, I felt an uncommon soreness and weariness in all my limbs. This was followed, during the whole night, by so strong a fever, that I was as restless as if I had lain on a bed of iron.

In less than a week, my fever began to abate, and I was attacked with sharp pains in my bowels. These continued for some time, and at length terminated in a confirmed diarrhœa. Not many weeks had passed in this afflicting manner, before I was alarmed by an attack from a different quarter, attended with retchings and acute pains, which strongly resembled a fit of the stone or gravel. Thus did it please God to permit me to be tried in the furnace; and though I had every possible help, yet my disorders were so complicated, and so violent, that they seemed to resist all the powers of medicine, though

administered in the most skilful, benevolent, and experienced manner.

What a change of the scene had now taken place ! All the outward comfort of life seemed to be fled ;—my active powers were suspended, and the nobler powers of the intellect so oppressed with pain, that I was utterly incapable of employing them to any advantage. Formerly, I had experienced much delight in attempting to do the will of God ; and this will ever be pleasing to a gracious soul. I was now called to the exercise of a duty much more difficult and arduous, that of patiently suffering the will of God, and practising a becoming resignation to such dispensations as are indeed painful to flesh and blood.

I had now scarce any intervals from pain ; one natural consequence of which was, that I could but seldom take any thing like refreshing rest and sleep. And as this continued to be the case, one week after another, my spirits and strength began to be quite worn out. As I was at this time often obliged to walk in my room in the dead of night, I sometimes cast an anxious eye towards heaven ; and when I beheld the stars glowing with ethereal brightness, and reflected on the stupendous works of God, I often sighed after a nearer union with him whose throne is above the stars, and who, by his immensity and glory, fills the universe.

After I had continued in this languishing state between two and three months, several of our very kind and respected friends in London thought that it would be advisable for me to try what effect a change of air might produce. Accordingly, about the middle of August, we concluded to proceed by easy stages to two or three different places in Kent. But before we set out a circumstance took place, one night, which is too remarkable to be omitted. I dreamed that I was on a visit, with some other friends, in Gower-street, and that on descending the stair-case which leads from the drawing-room to the back parlour, Mrs. K——, who first entered the room, was surprised at the appearance of two heavenly visitants, clothed in white and resplendent raiment. All who were present were much awed by these heavenly strangers, and I understood, in my sleep, from what Mrs. K—— dropped, that they informed her that they were come for me. I relate the circumstances as they occurred, without enlarging or commenting upon them, which I think wholly unnecessary; for if it were intended, on the one hand, as a divine intimation that I was ere long to join the glorified spirits in heaven, or merely designed, on the other, to quicken my pace in the way that leads to everlasting life,—let it be viewed in whatever point of light it may, some important ends might be answered by it.

Having spent Sunday, August 18th, in retirement, at the house of an amiable and pious friend, at Deptford, we took the stage the next morning for Chatham, where we slept two nights. On Wednesday we reached Sittingbourne, and had reason to bless God for the kindness we experienced from some Christian friends, who are distinguished by their simplicity and godly sincerity. We left them with regret the day following, when we proceeded to Canterbury, where, by a particular invitation before we left we were to spend a fortnight. We were surrounded with every thing that could tend to administer relief and comfort, but I was so oppressed with weakness and pain, that my spirits were often bowed down to the earth; yet my soul was kept in peace, and my mind continually centred in God.

After we had been absent from home about three weeks, it was thought advisable for me to try the effect of the sea air at Margate. Here likewise divine Providence cast our lot in a pious family, which obligingly furnished us with board, lodging, and every other necessary convenience: a matter of considerable importance in my afflicted state. I had been but a short time at Margate, before I began to feel the strong and refreshing effects of the sea air, which have been attended with very salutary consequences, had I been in a different habit of

body, but it was more keen and bracing than I
But my diarrhoea continued as
as before I left London, and my other
complaints seemed rather to increase. Dr. An-
Physician to the infirmary in this
e, advised me to make a trial of the warm
I took some preparatory medicines
and went in several times. But
the bath quieted my pains for a time,
they regularly returned soon afterwards, and the
profuse perspirations with which they were
always attended made me considerably weaker.
After we had tried every thing that could be
thought of, and had resided full five weeks at
Margate, we at length took our leave of it, and
set out for London on Monday, October 7th,
and, proceeding by easy stages, reached town on
Friday evening, 11th, convinced that in some
cases no effectual help is to be obtained but from
God, and thankful, at the same time, for all the
mercies we had experienced.

As the winter was now approaching, I grew
rather worse, and was obliged, ere long, to con-
fine myself wholly to my room. The severity of
the cold sensibly irritated my complaints, and all
hope of relief seemed to be cut off. Wearisome
nights and painful days followed each other in
a long and lingering succession, and my faith was
often tried to the very uttermost. I was now
indeed called to pass through deep waters, but

the floods were not permitted to overwhelm me ; for through the whole of these severe and distressing exercises, I received many indisputable proofs of the love of God.

And thus, at length, I was brought to the close of one of the most painful and suffering years that I ever passed through ; but, perhaps, when viewed in the light of eternity, it will appear to have been one of the most profitable in my whole life. For I have found by experience, that, "though no affliction at the present be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby : " and, at the same time, I well knew, that the soul in passing through the fire is often refined from its dross.

That I should have been actually brought to see the dawn of the new year, 1800, seemed like a miracle ; for in the course of nature, it appeared impossible that I should have lived to its commencement. But what a short-sighted creature is man ! How little can we penetrate into futurity ! How little can we discover, in general, of the divine dispensations, till they actually take place ! Their slow and gradual disclosure, however, is commonly attended with some fresh proofs of divine wisdom, power, and goodness. This consideration alone ought to silence the baneful suggestions of unbelief, and should encourage us to trust in the faithfulness of God,

during the most painful intervals of trial and suspense.

From my own experience, I was enabled, about this time, to bear witness to a fact, which has sometimes been considered as affording no inconsiderable proof of the immortality of the soul. Though the mortal body often pressed down, and almost overwhelmed, the immortal spirit, yet the latter, sooner or later, always gained the ascendancy. Of this I had repeated proofs in a variety of instances. Hence, the powers of the mind were incessantly active and vigorous, while the body appeared to be hastening to dissolution and the grave. The ancients thought, indeed, that the soul becomes more divine, the nearer we approach to death, as it is then struggling to disengage itself from the body. But the true cause of this activity may, perhaps, be that immortal vigour which was at first implanted in it, by its adorable Creator, which on some occasions discovers itself more strongly than at others.

My kind Physician, Dr. Whitehead, who had prescribed for me, at intervals, for many years, and who, from the beginning of my present illness, had attended me in the most obliging and disinterested manner, earnestly desired that I would consent to have another Physician called in; as he thought it might prove, at least, more satisfactory to my friends. We were happy on

this occasion, in having Dr. Hamilton near at hand, who had often given me many solid proofs of his kindness and friendship. The Physicians had frequent consultations together, and a variety of remedies and applications were prescribed, and carefully used. But my case, at length, appeared to be of such a nature, that neither the powers of medicine, nor the skill of the most experienced in the healing art, could afford me any lasting or effectual relief. Though I had long been convinced that my recovery could only be effected by the Lord of life and glory himself, I thought it my duty uniformly to persevere in using all the appointed means. I knew that should I have acted otherwise, through despondency, or mistrust of the divine goodness, I should have at once been guilty both of ingratitude and disobedience, which my soul abhors. But to pass from the body and its concerns, of which I would gladly lose sight; let me for a few moments take some notice of the nobler part, the immortal spirit.

Here again I recollect that the soul frequently discovered a considerable degree of activity and vigour. My thoughts were continually pursuing one subject or another, though I was hardly able to take a book into my hands. Many things likewise which I had met with, both in Christian and heathen writers, more particularly with reference to the soul, and the concerns of another life,

were frequently brought to my recollection, and strongly impressed upon my heart.

Sometimes, in the night-season, when I could have no rest, the saying of Empedocles would lead to a train of reflections: "Man falleth from his happy state, by being a fugitive, apostate, and wanderer from God." At others, I found myself involuntarily pursuing such sentiments as these, which had forcibly struck me in Euripides:

"Who knows whether that which is call'd death
Be not the road to a new life, and life
A real death?"

———"All that earth
Produced, to earth returns: whate'er derives
From an ethereal origin its birth
Again is wafted to the starry pole;
For nought that once existed e'er can die."

This, as well as the following passage, seemed to bear some affinity to the doctrine taught in the book of Ecclesiastes, where the sacred writer, having described the gradual process of dissolution, closes the whole with this solemn sentence: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

"O'er the dead let dust
Be strew'd, and every particle revert
Back to its ancient seat, whence into life
It migrated, the soul ascend to heaven,
The body mix with earth."

But few things of this kind were more frequently obtruded upon my mind, than the arguments used by Socrates, to prove the immortality of the soul. These, together with the conjectures which he offers with respect to the happiness of good men in another life, followed me for many weeks successively. Indeed, what he has offered on these subjects, as well as many other things relating to the new earth, in which the righteous shall dwell, are so very striking, though blended with much erroneous speculation, that I often derived both pleasure and profit from the recollection of them. Nor did the calmness and recollection with which this extraordinary man frequently thought and spake of death pass unnoticed, though they were often counteracted by expressions which indicated a state of fluctuation, doubt, and uncertainty. How instructing and animating his spirit and deportment! What magnanimity of soul appeared in his sentiments, when he said of his enemies, "They may indeed put me to death, but they cannot hurt me!" And when that solemn hour was actually drawing near, he manifested his usual vigilance in guarding the interests of truth. For, when one of his disciples, with affectionate concern, had desired to know how they must bury him, his reply was marked with that penetration which always characterized his conversation, and with that guarded pleasantness which never forsook him. He

desired, in short, that his friend would not confound Socrates with his body, as they were widely opposite in their very nature; finely exposing, at the same time, the absurdity of those who, while the conversation relates merely to the interment of the body, the most inconsiderable part of the man, nevertheless speak as if they intended to bury the soul and body together.

Though these considerations furnished my mind with many profitable reflections, and they certainly afford in a collateral way a strong confirmation of revelation itself, yet a Christian believer, in matters of such infinite importance, will never rest satisfied with any thing short of the Scriptures. And as the saints of God, in different ages, have borne witness to his almighty power, and the eternal truth of his word, in their last moments, the recollection of these had often encouraged and strengthened me in the faith. To these, therefore, I had frequent recourse at this time. I will only mention two or three instances, which are of a very remarkable nature. It may be that the recollection of them may be as profitable to others, as they have been to my own soul.

Without going back to those primitive days in which the Spirit of glory and of God so eminently rested upon the faithful in Christ Jesus, I shall select one that took place at the time when the Reformation was gaining ground in Germany.

The two others happened in our country, within the limits of the last century, in which the dying testimonies of the saints were more solemn and numerous, than perhaps in any age, either before or after that period, till the present time, in which the divine Spirit has been poured out in a marvellous manner upon persons of every description, and of every denomination.

The considerable number of great and good men who were suddenly raised up at the Reformation, many of whom became burning and shining lights in the world, and who witnessed, in their last moments, a hope full of immortality and glory, prove the work in which they were engaged to have been indeed of God. A large collection of their lives was published, with great care and fidelity, by Melchior Adam in the last century. But it will not perhaps be easy to select from the whole a dying testimony more blessed or instructive than that which he has recorded of Joachim Curœus, a German Physician, of eminent talents and singular piety.

This excellent man died of a burning fever, in which he evidenced, as in life, the subjection of his soul to the divine will, attended with fervent breathings after Christ, in the exercise of divine love. The state of his soul at this solemn season will best appear from some of those divine and weighty sentences which he then uttered.

“Lord, I am oppressed ; but it is enough for

me, that thy hand hath done it. My body now suffers because of sin, but my soul is raised and comforted with the assurance of eternal life. I will wrestle with Jacob, till the brightness of thy light shall appear. Come, Lord Jesus; and let all that love thee say, Come. And as for him that loves thee not, let him be *Anathema Maranatha*.

"Thou knowest who searchest the heart, that I love thee. With thee I shall be at the beginning of the new year, and shall be satisfied with thy sight, and drink of the wine of that everlasting joy which is in thy Father's house, where are many mansions, one of which is there reserved for me." He then cried out, "My heart glows at the prospect of life eternal, the beginnings of which I now actually feel within me.

"I have learned to know thee; and my aim hath been, that others should know thee aright. Son of God, acknowledge me also, and take me to thine embraces. To come to thee, my soul with desire leaps for joy; and because it is yet withheld, I think the time long. I desire to be dissolved. O, dissolve me, that I may be with thee! I am over-wearied by continuing here." I groan for that dwelling above, which thou hast revealed to me: as the traveller in a dark night looks for the sun, so do I earnestly look after the brightness of that light which is in the vision of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

"I shall see my Saviour, in the flesh, who is

exalted at the right hand of the Father, and there I shall bless him for all the blessings I have received from him. Thou wilt also set a guard over this body, even thy holy angels, to keep my dust and bones, which were, and shall be even for ever, the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost ; for it is impossible that this flesh, which hath been quickened by " a participation " and communion of the Spirit, and thus ingrafted into the body of Christ, should ever be annihilated, or for ever continued in the state of death. But thou, who art the Fountain of life, shalt require from the earth this thine own image ; and by sending forth thy Spirit afresh thou wilt again build it up, as a glorious living body, that it may thence become for ever a dwelling for thy Spirit to inhabit.

" There we shall follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. O glorious and divine Leader ! And there ~~we~~ shall sing the new song. Let us rejoice ! Hallelujah ! O, come let us go forth to meet our Redeemer !

" Our conversation is in heaven ; even in this life we must begin to know an eternal life, and follow in that order that Christ hath appointed. We shall be clothed upon, and not found naked ; and he who is the beloved Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, shall lead us to the fountains of living waters, and wipe all tears from our eyes. What the eye hath not seen,

nor the ear heard, nor hath entered into the hearts of men, is prepared for them that love God. This earthly life is but death ; but that is life indeed which Christ hath begun in my soul. And now I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; therefore I will praise him. O blessed soul, where Jesus Christ hath his seat, who doth lead and bear rule in all our motions and actions !

“I see the heavens now open. ‘Now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.’ Thou, Jesus Christ, art to me the resurrection and the life ! How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Redeemer ! Keep my soul, that it suffer not from that horrible dragon, the devil, Let it be bound up in the bundle of the living, and let my journey be to those who now live an immortal and heavenly life.”

Those who were witnesses of his last moments inform us, that these were but a small part of the ardent breathings of the soul of this blessed man, after the enjoyment of God in eternal life. Just before he expired, he was heard to say, “Now I die, and have gained admission, as with old Simeon. I die, witnessing to the truth of the Prophets and Apostles, blessing the Lord that he hath made the light of the Gospel, in his marvellous goodness, again to return, after a season of such darkness.” Having uttered these words, he shortly after sweetly fell asleep in Jesus.

The views which such dying testimonies afford

of the majesty and solemnity of religion are always important. I have never yet been able to reflect on the preceding account without much edification and comfort, and I believe it will still prove a blessing to my soul. But though believers are not, in general, favoured with so large a measure of the Spirit as rested on this holy man, and which rendered his latter end unusually glorious, yet some instances not less memorable have occurred. The death of our own countryman, that faithful Minister of Christ, Mr. John Holland, in the last century, was scarcely inferior, and many of the sentences which he dropped were equally weighty, animating, and impressive.

He appeared the evening before he died to have had a prospect of the glory that shall be revealed; and being filled with an ecstacy of joy, he cried out, "Now farewell world, welcome heaven. The day-star from on high hath visited my heart.

"O speak it, when I am gone, and preach it at my funeral, that God hath dealt familiarly with man. I feel his mercy; I see his majesty; 'whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth.' But I see things that are unutterable." And being ravished in spirit, he spoke about heaven with a divine cheerfulness in his countenance, and a soft, sweet voice. But what he uttered could not be perfectly understood.

On the following morning, raising himself, like dying Jacob, on his staff, he closed his blessed life with these blessed words: "O, what a happy change shall I make from night to day! from darkness to light! from death to life! from sorrow to solace! from a factious world to a heavenly being! O, my dear brethren, sisters, and friends, it pitieth me to leave you behind. Yet, remember my death, when I am gone; and what I now feel, I hope you shall feel ere you die, that God doth and will deal familiarly with men.

"And now, thou fiery chariot, that camest down to fetch up Elijah, carry me to my happy home. And all the blessed angels, that attended the soul of Lazarus, to bring it to heaven, bear me, O, bear me to the bosom of my Best-beloved! Amen, amen. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" And so he fell asleep.

To these must be added, the short account of the death of Dr. Theophilus Almer, (which is recorded by Strype,) who evidenced in his last moments so very singular and complete a triumph over sin, death, and hell, that it admits of but few parallels.

The historian informs us, that he died in January, 1625, "heroically closing his own eyelids, and with these words in his mouth, 'Let my people know that their Pastor died undaunted, and not afraid of death. I bless my God, I have no fear, no doubt, no reluctancy, but a sure con-

fidence in the sin-subduing merits of Jesus Christ !” *

Facts like these, one would think sufficient to stagger the infidel world, and to confirm the believers in Jesus. I do not wonder, therefore, that I was frequently led to consider them at so solemn a season, in which it pleased God to permit every grain of my grace to be tried to the uttermost. And I doubt not but that by this circumstance alone many stratagems of the enemy were defeated; and my mind was kept from sinking into that dejection which might otherwise have been the consequence.

But it may, perhaps, be matter of surprise to some to find, that at this period my days often seemed to pass with a rapidity that excited my astonishment. This will, indeed, sometimes appear to be the case where there is a rapid succession of ideas only. But circumstanced as I then was, it can only be ascribed to the compassion of Him who knows both how to sympathize with his suffering servants, and when to lighten the cross which he calls them to sustain for their greater profit and advantage.

It pleased God, indeed, afterwards to permit me to be exercised in a very different way. But this ought not to be wondered at, when we consider that, in the present state, the soul is exposed

* “Sin-overcoming.” He was Rector of Much-Hadham, Herts.

to so many changes, and life itself never continues in one stay. If the Apostle testifies from his own experience, that "we who are in this tabernacle groan being burdened," what reason have we to complain? Besides, the natural consequence of long-continued oppressive weakness and pain must be, that, in process of time, the spirits will be exhausted, and the energy of the soul depressed. But though this, perhaps, will ever be the case, more or less, till mortality is swallowed up of life, God has graciously provided various sources of relief and consolation for his servants. Instead of dwelling, therefore, any longer upon a circumstance that is naturally to be expected, while we continue in this vale of tears, it will be more profitable to suggest a few things which have been blessed to my own soul in the time of trial, and to point out the way in which God himself was pleased to vouchsafe deliverance.

I have ever found the greatest relief, in the season of trouble, from pouring out my soul before God in prayer. And though the answer be sometimes delayed, instead of fainting, it is then more especially necessary to continue instant in prayer, and, by the vigorous exercise of faith, to watch thereunto with all perseverance.

It is absolutely necessary likewise, on such occasions, to watch against the intrusion of anxious cares, and unprofitable reasonings, respecting our growth in grace, of which we are not then com-

petent to judge. For the kingdom of God, at such seasons, is gradually expanding in the heart of a believer, and the work of the Spirit is imperceptibly advancing towards perfection, much in the same manner as the earth is observed to bring forth its various productions and fruits, which are, by the co-operation of Providence, at length brought to maturity, independent of all those anxieties which so often distress the heart.

In the next place, I have ever found it necessary to cherish believing and encouraging views of the divine power and compassion, and to look up to heaven, as the more immediate residence of Him who is "the Father of mercies," and my God and Father in Jesus reconciled.

The many providential favours I had likewise received from a gracious God deeply affected my heart. Amongst these, I could not forget the many proofs of kindness and endearing sympathy which I had received from my dear brethren; indeed, from almost every quarter. These, as well as the many prayers which were offered up at the throne of grace on my behalf, I regarded as so many pledges of the love of God to my soul; for I could not but consider them as so many streams, incessantly flowing from that divine and original Source. This often melted down my heart, and inspired my soul with :
tion and praise.

My thoughts were, likewise, often relieved by the consideration of that blessed period, when the curse, and all its effects, shall be done away; when there shall be no more pain, nor sorrow, nor crying, but God himself shall for ever wipe away all tears from our eyes. The prospect of that blessed state, also, animated my soul, in which we shall be freed from all the defects and imperfections of the present life; when our knowledge, our perceptions, and our joys, shall be infinitely refined, heightened, and perfected; when the soul shall no longer view things by means of the visual rays, but in the same manner in which those pure intelligences view them, who were never clothed like us with mortal flesh; when it shall no more hear, as mortals do, by the intervention of an aërial fluid, but as a pure incorporeal spirit; nor, finally, any longer think by the intervention of the nervous fibres of the brain, but by its own essential force, because, being a spirit, the faculty of thinking belongs to its very nature.* Considerations like these have a tendency, as I have found by experience, to raise the mind when exposed to a state of depression.

But I do not remember any thing that proved so effectual and constant a source of relief, as the word of God. Here I always met with something to re-animate and strengthen my soul.

* Voyez M. Saurin, sur les Frayeurs de la Mort.

Having finished the account which is given of the triumphant state of the church of Christ, in the book of the Revelation, I proceeded to have the apostolical epistles read over to me, at intervals, as my strength would bear. But I was peculiarly struck with the glorious views which the epistle to the Hebrews gives us of the everlasting Gospel and its divine Author. The supreme dignity and glory of our Lord's person, the greatness of that salvation which he came from heaven to make known to the sons of men, and the nature of that eternal rest which he has prepared for his people, are, indeed, represented in so solemn and forcible a manner, that they are calculated to inspire our hearts with holy fear and jealousy lest any of us should fall short of that rest through an evil heart of unbelief. But, on the other hand, the infinite mercy and compassion of the great High Priest of our profession, and his ability to save unto the very uttermost all that come unto God through him, are represented in so animating and encouraging a manner ; as well as the eternal and unchangeable nature of his priesthood, the sovereign efficacy of his atoning blood, and the precious blessings of that new and everlasting covenant of which he is the great Mediator ; that they have the strongest tendency to encourage every believer to draw near to the majesty of God with a true heart in full assurance of faith ; while they are emboldened,

through the grace that is in Christ Jesus, to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering, and to continue steadfast unto the end.

At the same time, my soul received additional strength and confirmation, from considering the various instances of victorious faith which are recorded throughout the whole of the eleventh chapter; by which those eminent believers, though living under dispensations far inferior to that of the Gospel, were, nevertheless, favoured with so large a measure of the Divine Spirit, that they wrought righteousness, obtained promises, out of weakness were made strong, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, and, finally, obtained an everlasting triumph over all the enemies of their salvation.

The more I reflected on these great truths, the more were my prospects brightened, and my views enlarged; and shame and confusion fell upon my spiritual enemies, who were often attempting to take advantage of my weak and afflicted state. But, thanks be to God, who always causes his servants to triumph through Christ, who is their glory, their strength, and salvation.

The days had now attained to a considerable length, and the spring was far advanced, but its salutary influences brought me little or no relief. My pains continued and increased, and some of the symptoms with which they were attended

assumed a more formidable aspect. My good Physician therefore, who had more than once suggested that measure, now seriously proposed our having recourse without delay to a Surgeon, in order to ascertain, by the usual methods, whether some of my severest pains proceeded from the stone or not. A very valuable friend a few weeks before had earnestly recommended Mr. Pearson, of the Lock Hospital, a gentleman not less respectable for his benevolence and the liberality of his views, than his professional skill. Our attention therefore was instantly directed towards him, and we were soon favoured with a visit from him. Mr. Pearson discovered that, in addition to my other complaints, there was an enlargement of the prostrate gland, which alone was sufficient to account for some of the severest pains that I had felt.

This unexpected circumstance led to some alteration in our plan, and introduced a considerable change of the scene ; the whole of which, I cannot doubt, was under a providential direction. Mr. Pearson intimated, that though my complaint did not admit of a radical cure, yet he entertained hopes of being able to give me some relief. But at the same time he observed, as his residence was between three and four miles distant from us, and the stated track of his business lay at the west end of the town, it was impossible for him to render me any essential service, unless I could

to some lodgings sufficiently near for me two or three times a week ; and then he most obligingly added, that, though he would gladly give me all the help in his power, he would not suffer me to be at the least expense whatever for his attendance.

Here was another instance of that divine goodness of which I have had so much experience in life. We resolved therefore without delay to follow the leadings of Providence ; and in a short time removed to Broad-street, where we were furnished with lodgings in a very convenient house, situated at a small distance from Mr. Pearson's residence in Golden-square.

I had not been long under this gentleman's care, before I began to find a gradual alteration for the better. My diarrhœa was considerably checked. I lost the pains in my side. I could take some comfortable rest at night ; and those shivering fits which had regularly attacked me every week were quite removed. I had, however, some relapses ; for the diarrhœa, in particular, frequently obstructed these favourable appearances. I had, nevertheless, abundant reason to bless God for the gracious manner in which he was pleased to deal with me.

In process of time I was able to amuse myself for an hour or two, now and then, with some favourite passages in the classics. I attempted to translate some letters of Melancthon, as well as a

few select passages from the writers of the primitive church. My strength, however, was too small to admit of my undertaking any thing considerable. The few attempts which I made were useful in giving a turn to my thoughts, while they furnished me with a fund of innocent and intellectual pleasure.

I was now, for a considerable time, so effectually relieved from the pains in the urethra, and other contiguous parts, that I felt little or no inconvenience from them for many weeks together; and Mr. Pearson often observed, that I should soon recover my strength, were it not for the inveterate obstinacy of the diarrhœa.

The sultry heat that we experienced in July and August greatly affected and much weakened me, and, indeed, had a very unfavourable effect upon my whole constitution. I was likewise much oppressed at times with a strong bilious sickness. Thus every season is attended with some inconvenience or other to persons in a weak and languishing condition. In the latter end of September the atmosphere was effectually cooled by long-continued rains. These, with the north-easterly winds that were strongly felt about the same time, brought back many of my former pains; so variable has my state been. We persevered, however, in the usual remedies; and I have reason to bless God, they generally took effect.

As the winter was now drawing near, we judged it advisable to think of returning home before the weather might render it unsafe and dangerous for me to be removed. Impressed, therefore, with a deep sense of the many favours that we had received from a gracious Providence, and unfeignedly thankful for the important help and relief that I had obtained, we began to take leave of our friends at the west end of the town, and shortly after removed to our house in Hoxton-square; where we had the satisfaction of finding every thing in an agreeable situation.

Nothing very remarkable has occurred since that time. Some alterations were to be expected from the winter quarter, the unfavourable effects of which I have, indeed, repeatedly felt. To be kept in a state of suspense, and liable to the continued attacks of weakness and pain, is what I expect; and as my situation naturally exposes me to these things, so I trust they will ever be made to work together for my good.

I now find myself brought to the close of the eighteenth century, a period remarkable for the many changes that have taken place in the kingdoms of Europe, but much more memorable for the far more important events that have arisen in the church of God, within little more than fifty years past. And I esteem it a blessing to have been born during that period, to be a witness, at least, of many of them. But wide and extensive

as the present revival of religion has been, the Christian world may yet expect to see a more apostolical and truly primitive state of things than has ever yet appeared in the Christian church since it was founded by the twelve Apostles of the Lamb; for the prophetic Spirit has given many express intimations of such an event, and it must be drawing near.

In the mean time, when I reflect on all the divine dispensations, and endeavour to form a just and an impartial estimate of human life, it is my settled judgment, that the days of affliction and trial on the one hand, in the church militant, bear but a small proportion to the days of happiness and peace on the other. And I think believers must, in general, testify that the latter, when put in the balance, always preponderate. But were it indeed otherwise, it would ill become man, that is a worm, to arraign the wisdom and perfection of the divine dispensations. For the joys and glories of heaven will more than compensate for all the short-lived and transitory sorrows that we may have ever endured here on earth.

Although I have now finished these memoirs, I feel one duty more, at least, incumbent on me, that before I dismiss them, I may ascribe glory to God, and testify my good-will towards mankind. This I would fain attempt in a few short but weighty sentences, that they may serve as a conclusion to the whole.

As nothing has so powerful a tendency to excite gratitude and praise in the heart of man, as the recollection of the divine mercies, I shall begin with these. Ever since I received a divine conviction of the vanity of all created things, and their utter inability to supply the wants or to satisfy the desires of an immortal spirit, I have been constrained, notwithstanding many revolts, to cleave to God, as the sovereign good. And such indeed, from very long experience, have I always found him to be. His attributes and perfections have filled my soul with reverential awe. And I have often mourned in secret, on account of my utter inability to celebrate his condescension and mercy, his wisdom and power, his faithfulness and truth, in a manner more suitable to the glory and grandeur of his eternal majesty.

“ Thee, while the first archangel sings,
He hides his face behind his wings :
And ranks of shining thrones around
Fall worshipping, and spread the ground.

“ Lord, what shall earth and ashes do ?
We would adore our Maker too ;
From sin and dust, to thee we cry,
The great, the holy, and the high.”

Of all the precious gifts that God can confer on man, in the present state of trial, I consider the revelation of his Son in the heart of a sinner as the first and chiefest ; and, indeed, the certain forerunner of ten thousand other blessings. By

his own eternal Spirit, whose majesty my soul adores, he was pleased to convince me of the depths of the fall, of my utter helplessness, my guilt, pollution, and misery. And having completely subdued and triumphed over the proud but vain opposition of my corrupt nature, he at length revealed the Saviour to my penitent and believing heart, in all the glories of his person, and the riches of his grace. Him I adore as God incarnate, manifested in the flesh, to take away the sins of the world. To him my soul flies for refuge. He is my glory and defence, and the lifter up of my head. All my hopes, both for time and eternity, centre in him alone. And as I implore pardon and salvation from my adorable Saviour, in consequence of that grace which is made to abound towards the chief of sinners; so I seek eternal life through the application of his infinitely precious blood, his atoning sacrifice, his all-perfect righteousness, and the efficacy of his ceaseless and all-prevailing intercession at the right hand of the Father.

To the Holy Spirit, whose divine guidance I have repeatedly experienced in life, I ascribe all that saving light and true knowledge of the things of God, that I have ever felt or experienced. In consequence of his quickening, regenerating, and sanctifying influences, my hopes of a blessed immortality rest on scriptural grounds. He hath conducted me, by an invisible hand, through all

the snares, and dangers, and temptations to which I have been exposed in this present world. He hath, in great compassion, borne with my manners in the wilderness; at the same time, he hath always made sin to appear exceedingly bitter and dreadful to my soul. Having subdued my corruptions, reproved my wanderings, and corrected my errors, he hath filled my heart with solid joy and lasting peace, and proved himself to be, indeed, the eternal Comforter. For these and ten thousand other blessings I adore his ineffable Majesty; and my gratitude is increased by the recollection of the many instances which I have experienced, under his divine influence, of that union and fellowship with God which is a foretaste and an earnest of eternal blessedness.

Next to communion with God, I have ever esteemed the society of the faithful, and the fellowship of saints, as affording one of the most pure and exalted sources of pleasure and delight. Hence I have loved all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, of every denomination, without suffering my affections to be alienated by a contrariety of opinions, or an attention to the jarring interests or jealousies of men. And as the endless divisions that have been introduced into the Christian world have often proved, not only destructive of Christian charity and brotherly love, but likewise subversive of the interests of evangelical religion in all its branches; so it is fervently

to be desired, that pious men of every denomination would seriously consider, that no opinions in philosophy or systematic divinity are worthy of their more immediate attention, than such as have a manifest tendency to promote the glory of God, to enlarge and ennoble the faculties of the human soul, and to diffuse a spirit of generous candour and divine benevolence amongst mankind.

But to draw a veil over the imperfections of men, let us dwell a little longer on the goodness of God, of which so many instances occur in the course of our short and uncertain lives. I can testify from my own experience, (and I do it with a grateful heart,) that "godliness is great gain, having the promise, not only of the life that now is, but likewise of that which is to come." As I was, at first, taught by the word and Spirit of God to live for eternity, I have never paid any very particular attention to my temporal interests; being convinced, that as I had solemnly engaged to serve God in the Gospel of his Son, it was my indispensable duty to leave all my concerns in the hands of a gracious Providence. In consequence of this, my mind has not only been preserved from a variety of cares and anxieties; but, at the same time, I have enjoyed an abundance of all good things. And as these uniformly seem to have been given as pledges of his love, so they have been rendered much more precious

by an assurance that he would bless me and do me good in my latter end.

When we reflect on the manner in which God uniformly acts towards his creatures, it is impossible not to feel sentiments of gratitude and veneration for his infinite condescension ; but when we consider the nature and tendency of their conduct towards each other, in many instances, we shall see too much reason for grief and sorrow. What generous heart is there that has not sometimes mourned the vile prostitution of the sacred name of friendship, even amongst those who call themselves Christians ; notwithstanding its duties were regarded as most sacred and inviolable by the Heathens themselves ? I have known, indeed, a variety of instances, in which many were eminent for this amiable and Christian virtue ; and as I have proved them for so many years, so I can testify that nothing can exceed their disinterested faithfulness, or steady perseverance. And though I have had reason to lament a transient separation from some of them by death, since God was pleased to visit me with my present illness, yet many still remain, with whom, as well as those that are gone before, I hope, ere long, to spend an eternity of blessedness and glory.

As it is, perhaps, impossible for any man to pass through life without meeting with enemies at one time or another ; so if this has ever been my lot, I certainly have little reason to complain, for

I have been taught to profit by them, and they have been made useful to me. But in such a manner has God dealt with me, that I know not whether I have an enemy now left upon earth. I seem either to have out-lived them, or, what is better, they have been converted into friends. But be this as it may, I feel no disposition whatever to complain of any thing that I might have ever met with from my fellow-creatures. It becomes me rather, since God has dealt so bountifully with me, to abound in gratitude and praise. Nor can I think that any man has attained much of his Lord's Spirit, who has not felt universal benevolence towards all mankind, and who would not rejoice, whenever Providence shall put it in his power, to act the part of "a brother towards his friends, and towards his enemies."

But I must now conclude ; and shall therefore only add, that though I know not what may yet lie before me, I desire to commit my soul, and all my concerns, into the hands of a gracious God, calmly waiting the accomplishment of all his most faithful and precious promises. At the same time, I would be much employed in the angelical work of praise, imitating those celestial spirits who, by this divine exercise, are making perpetual advances towards the perfection of being and of blessedness.

And while I am waiting for the consummation of divine dispensations in heaven, I would be con-

stantly engaged, notwithstanding the imperfection of my views here on earth, in devout meditation on the word, the ways, and works of God ;

“ Glad to behold, though but his utmost skirts
Of glory ;—and far off, his steps adore.”

London, Dec. 30th, 1800.

CHAPTER IX.

AN account of Mr. Dickinson's last sickness and death is given in the following letters, which were addressed by his widow, Mrs. Elizabeth Dickinson, to the Rev. Joseph Benson :—

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE endeavoured, at your request, in the following very feeble sketch, to give you a brief account of the Lord's dealings with my dear husband, from the time his narrative concludes, to the last fortnight of his life.

From the time Mr. Dickinson concludes his memoirs, his disorder continued gradually to increase, though with intervals of ease. These were diligently redeemed and employed by him, in endeavouring to forward some manuscripts which, if his life had been spared till they were completed, he intended to publish. One in particular, which much engaged his thoughts, he has entitled, “*Philologia Biblica* ; or, an Introduction to the

Study of the Idioms and Phraseology peculiar to the Sacred Writings of the Old and New Testament." Part of the preface is completed, in which he has described and explained the nature and design of the work ; but though he had made considerable progress therein, he has left it quite unfinished.

As the warm weather advanced in the summer of 1801, he found some temporary relief from violent pain ; and, though his health was not, in reality, better, yet his spirits revived, and he appeared to gather strength ; so that some of his friends began to entertain hopes that he might again be called to work in his Lord's vineyard. But these prospects were soon clouded. The most alarming symptoms of his disorder returned with violence ; his pain became more acute, and, towards the latter end of the year, he was reduced to a state more feeble and weak than ever. During this time he was continually visited with divine consolation. As the outward man grew weaker, the inward man was renewed day by day. He still laboured to redeem his time, and improve every moment thereof, to the uttermost. It was all filled up, either in doing or suffering his Master's will.

During these marks of bodily affliction, his mind was kept active and vigorous, and was constantly bent heaven-ward. The Scriptures were his daily food, and he meditated upon them day and

night. His conversation was entirely spiritual, and frequently very animating; and he appeared to partake more fully, each following day, of the nature of the country to which he was hastening. From some things which I now recollect, I believe he was conscious that he was drawing near the end of his earthly race, but, from motives of tenderness to me, he seldom touched upon the subject.

Almost with the commencement of the present year, a great alteration took place in the state of his health. His pains became more violent than ever, and every alarming symptom visibly increased. For many months he was incapable, except at short intervals, of pursuing any of his favourite employments; but he was still engaged in prayer and silent meditation.

For many weeks before his death, he made it a rule to spend part of the Sabbath evenings with me in prayer for many relations and friends. At those seasons he had frequently near access to the throne of grace. The Spirit did indeed help his infirmities, while he pleaded with the Lord on behalf of many individuals.

The hour of his release from the burden of mortality rapidly, though almost imperceptibly, approached; but I had no apprehension that the time was so near, till he was seized with the fever, on the 28th of last April, which, in the space of a few days, put a period to his earthly course.

Hoxton-square, October 12th, 1802.

LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

MY mind has been so deeply and continually afflicted, during this suffering season, that it is not easy to collect my thoughts sufficiently to give you the account you desire of my beloved husband.

For many months God was sensibly preparing him for the last trying scene, and he was particularly led to consider, and thirst after, the faith which Abraham possessed, when "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." He also frequently expressed earnest desires after more of the spirit of praise and thanksgiving, often repeating those lines of our hymn,

"I cannot praise Thee as I would,
But Thou art merciful and good."

And considering the length and severity of his sufferings, I never saw any one who appeared to be so "strengthened according to the glorious power of the Lord, unto all patience, and long-suffering with joyfulness."

On Wednesday, April 28th, he was seized with a violent shivering fit, which was followed by a strong fever. Many fits rapidly succeeded the first, till he was reduced to a state of the most extreme weakness, which prevented his conversing much with any one ; yet what he did say at dif-

ferent times, could we recollect it, would fill many pages.

On Sunday, May 2d, when he was supposed to be very near death, I asked him if he had any particular advice to give me: he replied, "Only live near to God, live looking unto Jesus, live much in the spirit of prayer, and beware of carnal Corinthians;" meaning, as I well understood, half-hearted professors, those who are neither cold nor hot.

May 5th, waking out of a slumber after a fit, he said, "I see a great multitude engaged in the worship of God, and I shall be with them." Once, on my saying, "Perhaps you may revive again, and be able to come into the dining-room," he replied, "I shall go to the upper courts above!" At another time he spake nearly as follows:—"I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." And then addressing himself to me, he added, "The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy shade on thy right hand. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, he shall preserve thy soul; I speak this to you, my dear."

On May 9th he repeated with much earnestness, 1 Peter i. 6, 7: "Ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness

through manifold temptations : that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ : ” and then added, “ Unto you who believe he is precious.” He frequently said, “ To me to live is Christ, to die is gain.” At one time he repeated these lines :

“ My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights !
In darkest shades, if thou appear,
My dawning is begun :
Thou art my soul’s bright morning star,
And thou my rising sun”.

On Tuesday, May 11th, in the midst of a violent fit, I heard him whisper, “ We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep.” I said, “ But are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls : ” he immediately replied, in broken words, with great energy, “ It was all of grace, free mercy in Christ Jesus.” After the fever abated that evening, and he began a little to revive, his soul was abundantly filled with divine consolation ; he seemed at a loss to express the joy he felt, his love to Christ, or his views of God’s boundless mercy and infinite compassion. He said, “ I seem all happiness.” Notwithstand-

ing the fever frequently confused his thoughts, and affected his recollection, a strength of intellect appeared almost to the last that was amazing.

During one of the following nights, he cried out, "O happy, happy spirits, I see you, I see you all, and I am coming to you. They are waiting for me, and I must go;" and clapping his hands, he shouted, "Victory, victory, my Jesus, and my All!" To one of his nurses he said, "For Christ's sake, make sure of an interest in him; it is neither Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, nor any other creature, but Jesus Christ the corner-stone: build upon him, as the sure foundation." While taking a little refreshment, perceived him deeply engaged in prayer, and distinctly heard the following words: "That an abundant entrance may be administered unto us into the eternal kingdom." Soon after he said to me, "The Lord give you the bread of life." I answered, "I am sure he will give it you, and I trust I shall partake of it:" he replied, "I doubt not but you will," and spoke with sweet confidence of our being mutual partakers of the blessings of the kingdom.

He several times bore testimony to the strength and spirituality of our union; that it was not a common union, or a union that would be dissolved by death. On the contrary, that it would only be strengthened and refined, and that in the

heavenly world we should meet to be eternally re-united.

To one of the nurses that attended him he said, "I have not a shadow of doubt; my evidence is as clear as the noon-day sun!" At another time, "I have nothing but glory and heaven in my view; my heart is full of God, my cup runneth over!" He told her he should "be glad to leave some further dying testimony, that his friends might be satisfied, but that he was so low he could not converse with them." She replied, "You have given us proof enough." "Then," said he, "tell them God is love; I know and feel him so!" Having had a very severe fit, and being extremely weak after it, he said, "What a mercy it is that the Lord careth for the righteous!" A person present replied, "He does, and it shall be well with them." "Yes," said he, "well for ever and ever, glory be to God!" The nurse giving him a little drink, with his hands clasped, and his eyes lifted up to heaven, he entreated her to love the Lord Jesus with her whole heart: "O," said he, "the sinner's friend! Never forget the sinner's friend!"

May 14th, in the evening, he appeared very earnestly engaged in prayer; but I could only hear these words, "Lord, make us wise unto salvation!" On my going to him, he said, (with peculiar tenderness, taking my hand,) "My dear love, sweet is thy voice to me: God bless you."

These were the last words he spoke to me ; for a fit presently came on, which was followed by a very painful and restless night.

On May 15th, after being in extreme pain, when we thought him past speaking, about two o'clock in the afternoon, he opened his eyes, and, as the nurse was giving him a little wine with a teaspoon, he suddenly stopped her, and pointing with his finger upward, he said, "Hark, do you not hear? they are come for me. I am ready, quite ready." A few minutes after she spoke to him again, he said, "Stop, say nothing but—Glory, glory!" These were the last words he ever spoke. After a very painful struggle, which lasted more than four hours, his happy spirit took its flight, about twenty-five minutes past seven o'clock in the evening.

APPENDIX.

THE PIOUS STUDENT'S CONFLICT IMPROVED,

AND

THE METHOD IN WHICH GOOD MEN MAY PRO-
SECUTE THEIR STUDIES WITHOUT SPIRITUAL
LOSS.

How soon is sight gone, when the sun is eclipsed ! So it is with me. When shall I have skill to discern and resist the beginnings of decay ? O that I could lift up a Jehoshaphat's cry to the Lord of hosts ! Then would the day clear up, and I should see my salvation come flying upon the wings of the wind, and mounted upon the clouds for my help. I have one hard task to do : but O Thou to whom nothing is hard, reveal thy will, and conquer mine.

An immoderate minding of somewhat, in itself for aught I can yet see, not unlawful, has been a thorn in my flesh, for several days, which has spent much venom against my inward man ; but I must not submit to my adversary : there is no

safety but in overcoming. Help me thoroughly, O my God, and Thou shalt have the honour of the day. I would fain inquire into my soul, how I contracted this distemper ; and upon inquiry I find it had such steps as these :—

I was withdrawn, I know not how, from the tender sight of Christ ; and, the influences of spiritual warmth being damped, night came upon me, and I considered it not. My soul fell asleep, but without any refreshment. I awaked a little now and then, but slumber benumbed me, that I could not rise up. I would fain have cried out for help, but my words were like an arrow without feathers, that could not reach the mark. And all this while, an earthly and momentary matter of delight solicited my fancy, and proffered some pleasure to my mind ; and, in regard I judged it not, as to the matter of it, evil, I gave way, till it had eaten into my soul like a canker, and began to build its nest in the very place which I had lately prepared and devoted for the entertainment of Christ only. It was restless, and would not yield to Christ's supremacy in my affections, but still offered some moonlight satisfaction to my mind, instead of the withdrawn beams of the sun. And when Christ whispered some conviction into my heart, and raised some small yearnings after him, this glow-worm glittered upon me ; and though it had neither light nor heat, yet it would offer itself as a competent balance, instead

of the true spiritual light and warmth which I lately had, but which now was retired to a distance from me, for my trial and exercise.

I discerned the snare, but herein lay my strait : my judgment told me the matter itself was necessary, and that a moderate diligence might be employed about it. But neither that, nor any thing else, must dethrone Christ from the chief seat in my affections. I found it had so twisted itself into my fancy, that I knew not how to use my thoughts about it, with the moderation that would consist with Christ's supreme government and sway in my inmost affections. So that, how to divide between the matter itself, and my excessive affection to it ; to do the one, and guard against the other ; here lay the difficulty.

The matter on which this inordinate fancy fed itself was something relating to literature, which I judged, in its own nature, lawful and useful. To remedy which distemper, I poured out my complaint before the Lord, and began the following meditations.

How to pursue a lawful Thing lawfully.

EVERY pursuit of a lawful thing is so far sinful to me, as the pursuit thereof doth tend to distract my mind in prayer and converse with God. That which tends to contract and confine my view of the worth of Christ, my necessity of him, and my relation to him ; that which hinders

me from a penitent and vigorous watchfulness, and resistance against the defiling nature of my heart-corruptions; that which weakens the exercise of my faith, about the reality of divine truths, God's all-seeing eye, the constant necessity of holiness in my heart and aim, my unlimited and free resignation to the will of God, and an expectation of the appearing of Christ, and my own dissolution; that which offers violence to all or any Christian duty, which takes off my desire for the ordinances, and the profitable use of them, as if the time were lost which is spent in such work; that which cares not for an exercise of faith and prayer, for a blessing upon it, and direction and assistance from God in it: every one of these doth declare itself so far to be a work of the flesh, and not wrought in God. For if I am wholly redeemed, then nothing in me is to be any longer at my natural command; but my whole self, and all my ways and concernments, do come under the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus. In all which forementioned particulars, I have found guilt sliding in upon me with a strong hand.

In the next place, I would consider what civil actions, labours, or studies may be truly accounted lawful, and within that command and permission, in the fourth commandment, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do." And, upon inquiry, they appear to be these. What-

soever may conduce to administer any true natural good to the body, estate, or credit of myself or others, which lies included in any of the precepts of the second table : whatsoever may conduce to polish true reason, and free the discerning faculty of the mind, from that captivity, darkness, and infirmity, contracted by the fall of our first parents, which disables the understanding, in a great measure, to discern between things morally good and evil, without which the discursive faculty of the soul cannot act within itself, or be capable of any impressions for its good from the words of others. The freeing of the understanding from these things would tend much to make way for the entrance of gracious convictions where the word of God is heard, or would leave that soul more inexcusable. And in order hereunto, whatsoever may help reason in its exercise, as conference with, and reading the labours of, such whom God hath fitted, in any measure, for repairing the sad breach made on human nature : whatsoever may conduce to the help of memory, as the art of reading and writing, which art we find justified in the Scriptures : whatsoever may make the offices of humanity, as well as Christianity, more communicable, as the knowledge of tongues ; the ordinary learning of which seems to be justified by the extraordinary gift of tongues, whereby the Apostles were enabled to dispense the Gospel in the world : whatsoever, also, may tend to the understanding

of the letter of the Scriptures, as the knowledge, especially, of the original tongues: and whatsoever may facilitate the lawful employments of men, as arithmetic, navigation, other arts and manufactures; not properly serving the bare lust, but the true advantage and lawful comfort and conveniency of the rational creature.

Having weighed the lawfulness of the fore-mentioned particulars, among which one of these cases doth at present, more than the rest, concern my own consideration, and further inquiry, I would next consider how a natural or civil lawful action may be done lawfully; so as not to prejudice the inward man, by grieving the Spirit of God, either as to the manner in which a man exercises his care, pains, diligence, or study, as to his end and design therein.

A right spiritual end, in natural and moral actions, lies in these respects:

1. When I serve the will of God intentionally, in obeying the law of nature, which God has subjected me to, as in eating, drinking, using of medicine, clothing, sleep.

2. When I desire more dutifully to serve the will and glory of God, by my health, estate, credit, and endowments of mind, than I could attain unto without those means.

3. When the will and glory of God are so far the soul of my natural and civil actions and designs, that my delight doth not terminate in

the things done or enjoyed, but, passing through them, takes up its rest in the enjoying, pleasing, and serving God therein.

For the better regulating the mind in such actions and labours, in pursuance of a right end, be attentive to these rules and helps. Consider,

1. A Christian life lies in union with Christ, and not in any of the things or enjoyments here below.

2. They are such things and enjoyments as the enemies of God may be employed in, and possessed of, in this world, as well as the servants of God.

And, therefore, that such common work may be done spiritually,

1. Sanctify it by prayer.

2. Rely on God, by faith, for such abilities of body or mind as are suitable to such work.

3. Let not the thoughts be inordinately devoured in it. And to that end,

4. Force the heart to read and meditate on the Scriptures, with more seriousness and labour for an inward value thereof, above any other labour or study.

5. Judge not any useful labour, work, or study, to be materially or in itself evil, because your inordinate affection about it is sinful; but rather regulate your desires to moderation, and a right end in what you do.

6. Be contented in the measure of your attainment.

7. View the excellency of God in Christ, appearing in all created skill, excellency, and worth. Strive to wind up your heart by creature-excellencies, instantly, to a more actual enjoyment of them, as his gifts only, and so to himself, as the fountain of perfection.

Thus have I been wrestling with a monster bred in my own bowels; but, O Captain of my salvation, breathe truth, faith, virtue, and blessing upon these meditations, or else all my labour is lost, and my inquiry into my disease, but spent in vain. Every good and perfect gift comes down from above; and therefore my eyes are to the hills, from whence cometh my help. Let not the poor return ashamed of his hope. I leave my success upon thy hands, who hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

THE LIFE

OF

MR. JOHN JANEWAY,

FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE IN CAMBRIDGE.

ABRIDGED FROM THE NARRATIVE OF

MR. JAMES JANEWAY.

THE LIFE
OF
MR. JOHN JANEWAY.

CHAPTER I.

MR. JOHN JANEWAY was born October 27th, 1633, of religious parents, in Lylly in the county of Hertford. He soon gave his parents the hope of much comfort; and the symptoms of something more than ordinary quickly appeared in him: so that some who saw this child, much feared that his life would be but short; others hoped that God had some rare work to do by him. He soon outran his superiors for age in learning. And it was thought by no incompetent judges, that for pregnancy of wit, solidity of judgment, the vastness of his intellect, and the greatness of his memory, he had no superiors, considering his age and education.

He was initiated in the Latin tongue by his own father; afterwards he was brought up for some time at St. Paul's School in London, where

he made a considerable proficiency in Latin and Greek under the care of Mr. Langly. When he was about eleven years old he took a great fancy to arithmetic and the Hebrew tongue.

About this time his parents, removing into a little village called Aspoden, had the opportunity of having this their son instructed by a learned neighbour, who was pleased to count it a pleasant diversion to read mathematics to him, being then about twelve years old ; and he made such progress in those profound studies, that he read Oughtred with understanding before he was thirteen yearsold. A person of quality, hearing of the admirable proficiency of this boy, sent for him to London, and kept him with him for some time, to read mathematics to him. That which made him the more to be admired was, that he did what he did with the greatest facility. He had no small skill in music and other concomitants of the mathematics.

In the year 1646 he was chosen by that learned gentleman, Mr. Rous, the Provost of Eton College, one of the foundation of that school, being examined in the Hebrew tongue, in which it was thought he was beyond precedent. He gave no unsuitable returns to the high expectation that was conceived of him.

After a little continuance at Eton he obtained leave of his master to go to Oxford, to perfect himself in the study of mathematics, where,

being owned by that great scholar, Dr. Ward, one of the Professors of the University, he attained to a strange exactness in that study; there was nothing, being within the reach of a man, but he would undertake and grasp it. The Doctor gave him great help and encouragement, and looked upon him as one of the wonders of his age; he loved him dearly, and could for some time after his death scarce mention his name without tears. When he had spent about a quarter of a year with Dr. Ward at Oxford, he was commanded to return again to Eton, where he soon gave proof of his great improvement of his time while he was absent, by making an almanac, and calculating of the eclipses for many years beforehand; so that by this time he had many eyes upon him as the glory of the school. That which increased his real worth was, that he did not discover the least affectation or self-conceit, neither did any discernible pride attend these excellencies. So that every one took more notice of his parts than himself.

When about seventeen years old he was chosen to King's College in Cambridge; at which time the electors even contended for the patronage of this scholar. He was chosen first that year, and an elder brother of his in the sixth place; but he was very willing to change places with his elder brother.

Besides his great learning, and many other

ornaments of nature, his deportment was so sweet and lovely, his demeanour so courteous and obliging, even when he seemed unconverted, that he must be vile with a witness that did not love him. Yea, many of them who had little kindness for morality, much less for grace, could not but speak well of him. His great wisdom and learning even commanded respect, where they did not find it. He had an excellent power over his passions; and was in a great measure free from the vice which usually attends such an age and place.

But all this while it is to be feared, that he understood little of the worth of Christ and his own soul: he studied indeed the heavens, and knew the motion of the sun, moon, and stars; but he thought little of God, who made these things; he pried little into the motions of his own heart; he did not much busy himself in the serious observations of the wandering of his spirit; the creature had not yet led him to the Creator, but he was still too ready to take up with mere speculation. But God did, when he was about eighteen years old, shine upon his soul with power; and convince him what a poor thing it was to know so much of the heavens and never come there; and that the greatest knowledge in the world without Christ is but an empty business. He now thought Mr. Bolton had some reason on his side, when he said, "Give me the

most magnificent glorious worldling that ever trod upon earthly mould, richly crowned with all the ornaments and excellencies of nature, art, policy, preferment, or what heart can wish besides ; yet without the life of grace, to animate and ennoble them, he were to the eye of heavenly wisdom but as a rotten carcase, stuck over with flowers, magnified dung, golden damnation." He now began to be of Anaxagoras's mind, that his work upon earth was to study heaven, and to get thither ; and that except a man might be admitted to greater preferment than this world can bestow upon her favourites, it was scarcely worth the while to be born.

CHAPTER II.

THE great work of conversion was not carried on in his soul in that painful manner that it is upon some ; but the Lord was pleased sweetly to unlock his heart, by the exemplary life and heavenly and powerful discourse of a young man in the college, whose mind God had inflamed with love to his soul. He quickly made an attempt upon this hopeful young man ; and the Spirit of God applied his counsels with such power, that they proved effectual for his awakening ; being accompanied with the preaching of Dr. Hill and

Dr. Arrowsmith, with the reading of several parts of Mr. Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest*.

Now a mighty alteration might easily be discerned in him: he quickly looks quite like another man. He is now so much taken up with things above the moon and stars, that he had little leisure to think of these things, only as they pointed higher. He began now not to taste so much sweetness in those studies which he did so greedily employ himself in formerly. He began to pity them who were curious in their inquiries after every thing but that which is most needful to be known, Christ and themselves; and that which sometimes was his gain, he now counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, he esteemed all things but as dung and dross in comparison of Christ, and desired to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. Not that he looked upon human learning as useless; but when fixed below Christ, and not improved for Christ, he looked upon wisdom as folly, and learning as madness, and that which would make one more like the devil, more fit for his service, and put a greater emphasis to their misery in another world.

Mr. Janeway now began to inquire how he might best improve what he already knew, and turn all his studies into the right channel. Grace did not take him off from, but made him more diligent and spiritual in, his study. And now Christ was at the end of every thing. How did

he plot and contrive how he might most express his love and thankfulness to Him who had brought him out of darkness into his marvellous light ! To this end he sent up and down packets of letters, in which he discoursed so substantially and experimentally of the great things of God, that it would not at all have unbecome some grey head to own what he wrote.

He was not a little like young Elihu, in whose words he used to excuse his freedom with persons of years, whose souls he early pitied. He said, "Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom ; but there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding : I am full of matter ; the spirit within me constraineth me : behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles : I will speak that I may be refreshed," &c. O then how sweet was the savour of his graces ! He could not but speak the things which he had seen and heard, and even invite all the world to taste and see how good the Lord is.

He began first with his relations, begging of them to think of their immortal souls, and to lay in speedy provision for a deathbed and eternity. O with what compassion did he plead the cause of Christ with their souls ! What pathetic expressions did he use ! what vehement exhortations, how frequent, how particular in his applications to them ! O with what gravity and

majesty would he speak of the mysteries of the Gospel!

Read what his language was (when he was between eighteen and nineteen years old) in a letter to an ancient Minister that he stood related to, who at that time walked very heavily.

“REVEREND SIR,

“THERE are two things, the want of which I have had experience of in your family, though not in every degree; yet in that intenseness of degree wherein they ought to be; which are the real power of godliness and religion. And then that which is the fruit of the former, that cheerfulness, delight, spiritual joy, and serenity of mind which are to be had in religion and nowhere else; and that not in religion in its weakest degrees, but in a real vigour, power, and life, and in a more close constant walking with God; from a tender sense of the worth of souls, especially those of your family. And knowing the duty which my relation to it doth lay upon me, and having confidence of their well acceptance of it, I have undertaken to open my thoughts unto them.

“In most families in England I fear there is neither the form nor the power of godliness, where there is no fear of God, no regard of him, no acting under him, or in reference to him. These are in my opinion twice dead, nay, not so

much as having the dead carcase of religion. Objects of pity they are! and O how few are there that spend one compassionate thought upon them!

“Others there are who some way or other, it may be from tradition from good parents, it may be from knowing the fashion of those in their rank, it may be from the frequent inculcation of good instructions from Christian friends or godly Ministers, or some struggling eruptions of conscience, having gotten the outward shell of religion, without any kernel or solidity at all. And this generation doth usually trust to this their religion, that it will bring them to a place like a sleeping-place in heaven, or keep them out of hell, though they live without God in the world. These are poor creatures too; making haste to their own destruction, and know it not, yea, thinking that they are in a fair way for heaven. O, that there were never a family to which we are related, which gave too sad cause of fear, that it were in such a case, or near such a case, as this is!

“A third sort of people there are which have the reality of religion, but yet in much weakness, coldness, faintness, dimness, and intermission; beginning to have some life in their head, a little in their heart, but the feet of their affections and actions have little or no motion. And where shall we find a Christian that is got any higher than this, yea, that doth in good earnest strive to

get any higher? Now there are higher attainments to be reached after; there is a having our conversation in heaven while we are upon earth; neither doth this consist in some weak discourses, about God, heaven, and the things of religion; it consists not in the mere praying twice a day, and in keeping the Sabbath in an usual manner; it consists not in a few thoughts of religious objects coming into the mind in a common way, and as easily lost as got. But true religion raiseth his soul to longings, hungerings, and thirstings, not without some enjoyments. Religion in power is to act for God with strength, vigour, earnestness, intenseness, delight, cheerfulness, serenity, and calmness of mind. The fruits of the Spirit are joy in the Holy Ghost, and peace. Fear, disquiet, and terrors are usually the introduction to a better state, but they are not of the essentials of religion; yea, the contrary frame of spirit is to be striven for.

“To speak yet more plainly, and to tell you, honoured Sir, what fears and jealousies are, with reverence to yourself, and tender affection unto all your family, I fear that you yourself are subject to too many desponding melancholy thoughts. The causes whereof give me leave with submission to guess at. The first I think may be your reflecting on your entering upon the ministry without that reverence, care, holy zeal for God, love to Christ, and compassion to souls, which is

required of every one that undertakes that holy office. It may be there was rather a respect to your own living in the world than of living to God in the world. Be it thus ; be it not as bad, or be it worse ; the remedy is the same. These have a wounding power in them, which will be felt to be grievous. Sad thoughts keep this wound open too long, and are not available to the having of it cured. Wounds indeed must be first opened, that they may be cleansed ; but no longer than the Balm of Gilead is to be applied, that they may be healed. And when Christ is made use of aright, he leaveth joy and comfort ; yea, a constant humility of spirit is no way inconsistent with this peace of God.

“A second cause of your heaviness may be a sense of the state of the people which God hath committed to you : and indeed who can but mourn over people in such a condition ? Objects of pity they are ; and the more, because they pity not themselves. I have often wrestled with God, that he would direct you in what is your duty concerning them ; which I persuade myself is your earnest request. Now, if after your serious examining of yourself what your conscience doth conclude to be your duty, you do it, and see you do it ; you are then to rest upon God for his effectual working.

“Another cause of heaviness may be the divisions between yourself and some of your relations. O

that a spirit of meekness and wisdom might remove all cause of sorrow for that ! But were the power of godliness more in hearts and families, all the causes of such trouble would soon be removed : there would be less that would deserve reprehension ; and there would be a fitness of spirit to give and bear reproof ; to give in meekness and tenderness, and to bear in humility, patience, and thankfulness. Some cares and thoughts you may have concerning your family when you are gone. But let faith and former experience teach you to drive away all such thoughts. Your constitution and solitariness may also be some cause of melancholy : but there is a duty which if it were exercised would dispel all ; which is heavenly meditation, and contemplation of the things which true Christian religion tends to. If we did but walk closely with God one hour in a day in this duty, O what influence would it have upon the whole day besides ! This duty, with the usefulness, manner, and directions, &c., I knew in some measure before, but had it more pressed upon me by Mr. Baxter's Saints' Everlasting Rest, that can scarce be over-valued, for which I have cause for ever to bless God.

“As for your dear wife, I fear the cares and troubles of the world take off her mind too much from walking with God so closely as she ought to do, and from that earnest endeavour after higher degrees of grace. I commend therefore to her

and all, this excellent duty of meditation : it is a bitter-sweet duty,—bitter to corrupt nature, but sweet to the regenerate part. I entreat her and yourself, yea, I charge it upon you with humility and tenderness, that God have at least half an hour allowed him in a day for this exercise. O this most precious, soul-raising, soul-ravishing, soul-perfecting duty ! Take this from your dear friend as spoken with reverence and real love and faithfulness. My fear and jealousy, lest I should speak in vain, maketh me say again,—For God, by me, doth charge this upon you.

“One more direction let me give, that none in your family satisfy themselves in family prayer. But let every one, twice a day, if it may be possible, draw near to God in secret duty. Here secret wants may be laid open ; here great mercies may be begged with great earnestness ; here the wanderings and coldness that were in family duty may be repented of and amended. This is the way to get seriousness, reality, sincerity, cheerfulness in religion ; and thus the joy of the Lord may be your strength. Let those who know their duty do it ; if any think it not a necessary duty, let them fear lest they lose the most excellent help for a holy, useful, joyful life, under the assistance of God’s Spirit ; whilst they neglect that which they think unnecessary, take some of these directions from sincere affection, some from my own experience, and all from a real and com-

passionate desire of your joy and comfort. The Lord teach you in this and in the rest. I entreat you never to rest, labouring still on, till, after the foretastes of his comforts in this life, you have attained to true spiritual joy and peace in the Lord. The God of peace give you this direction and perfection in eternal life, in the enjoying of infinite holiness, purity, and excellency through Christ."

In another letter to a reverend friend that had the care of many children, he thus adviseth :—

"SIR,

"YOUR charge is great upon a temporal account, but greater upon a spiritual; many souls being committed to your charge. Out of an earnest desire of the good of souls, and your own joy and peace, I importunately request that you should have a great care of your children, and be often dropping in some wholesome admonitions; and this I humbly, with submission to your judgment, commend to you: not to admonish them always together, but likewise privately one by one, not letting the rest know of it: wherein you may please to press upon them their natural corruption, their necessity of regeneration, the excellency of Christ, and how unspeakably lovely it is to see young ones setting out for heaven. This way I think may do most good, having had experience of it myself in some small measure.

God grant that all may work for the edifying of those who are committed to you ! I leave you under the protection of him that hath loved us, and given himself for us."

Thus he seemed to be swallowed up with the affairs of another world.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN he was about twenty years old, he was made Fellow of the College ; which did not a little advance those noble projects which he had in his head, for the promoting of the interest of the Lord Christ. Then how sweetly would he insinuate into the young ones, desiring to carry as many of them as possibly he could along with him to heaven ! Many attempts he made upon some of the same house, that he might season them with grace, and animate and encourage those who were looking towards heaven. And as for his own relations, never was there a more compassionate and tender-hearted brother. How many pathetical letters did he send to them ! and how did he follow them with prayers and tears, that they might prove successful ! How frequently would he address himself to them in private ! and how ready to improve providences and visits, that he might set them home upon them ! How

excellently would he set forth the beauty of Christ! He earnestly would persuade them to inquire into the state of their souls. How would he endeavour to bring them off from sandy foundations, and resting upon their own righteousness! In a word, he was scarce content to go to heaven without, and through mercy he was very successful among, his own relations; and the whole family soon savoured of his spirit. How were the children put upon getting choice Scripture, and their catechisms, and engaged in secret prayer and meditation! Father, mother, brethren, sisters, boarders were the better for his excellent example and holy exhortations. He was a good nurse, if not a spiritual father, to his natural father, as you may read afterwards; and some of his brethren have cause to bless God for ever, that ever they saw his face, and heard his words, and observed his conversation, which had so much of loveliness and beauty in it, that it could not but commend religion to any that took notice of it. He could speak in St. Paul's words, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for you all is, that you may be saved."

Read what his heart was, in these following lines:—

"Distance of place cannot at all lessen that natural bond whereby we are conjoined in blood, neither ought to lessen that of love. Nay, where true love is, it cannot; for love towards you I

can only say this, that I feel it better than I can express it ; as it is wont to be with all affections : but love felt and not expressed is little worth. I therefore desire to make my love manifest in the best way I can. Let us look upon one another not as brethren only, but as members of the same body whereof Christ is the Head. Happy day will that be wherein the Lord will discover that union ; let us therefore breathe and hunger after this, so that our closed knot may meet in Christ. If we are in Christ, and Christ in us, then we shall be one with each other. This I know, you cannot complain for want of instruction. God hath not been to us a dry wilderness or a barren heath ; you have had line upon line, and precept upon precept ; he hath planted you by the rivers of water. It is the Lord alone indeed who maketh fruitful, but yet we are not to stand still and do nothing. There is a crown worth seeking for : seek therefore, and that earnestly. O seek by continual prayer ; keep your soul in a praying frame : this is a great and necessary duty, nay, a high and precious privilege. If thou canst say nothing, come and lay thyself in an humble manner before the Lord. You may believe me, for I have through mercy experienced what I say. There is more sweetness in one glimpse of God's love, than in all that the world can afford. O do but try ; O taste and see how good the Lord is. Get into a corner, and

throw yourself down before the Lord, and beg of God to make you sensible of your lost undone state by nature, and of the excellency and necessity of Christ. Say, 'Lord, give me a broken heart; soften and melt me. Let me be any thing in the world, so I may be but enabled to value Christ, and be persuaded to accept of him, as he is tendered in the Gospel. O that I may be delivered from the wrath to come! O a blessing for me, even for me!' And resolve not to be content till the Lord have answered you. My bowels yearn towards you; my heart works. O that you did but know with what affection I write now to you, and what prayers and tears have been mingled with these lines! The Lord set these things home, and give you a heart to apply them to yourself. The Lord bless all the means that you enjoy; for his blessing is all in all. Give me leave to deal plainly, and to come a little closely to you; for I love your soul so well, that I cannot bear the thoughts of the loss of it. Know this, that there is such a thing as the new birth; and except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. This new birth has its foundation laid in a sense of sin, and a godly sorrow for it, and a heart set against it: without this there can be no salvation. Look well about you, and see into yourself; and thou wilt see that thou art at hell's mouth without this first step, and nothing but free grace and pure

mercy is between you and the state of the devils. The Lord deliver us from a secure careless heart ! Here you see a natural man's condition. How darest thou then lie down in security ? O look about for your soul's sake ! What shall I say, what shall I do, to awaken your poor soul ? I say again, Without repentance there is no remission ; and repentance itself may lose its labour if it be not in the right manner. Tears, and groans, and prayers will not do without Christ. Most people, when they are convinced of sin, and are under fears of hell, run to duty, and reform something ; and thus the wound is healed, and by this thousands fall short of heaven. For if we be not brought off from ourselves and our righteousness, as well as our sins, we are never likely to be saved. We must see an absolute need of Christ, and give ourselves up to him, and count all but dung and dross in comparison of Christ. Look therefore for mercy only in Christ ; for his sake rely upon God's mercy. The terms of the Gospel are, Repent and believe. Gracious terms ! Mercy for fetching, nay, mercy for desiring, nay, for nothing but receiving. Dost thou desire mercy and grace ? I know thou dost ; even this is the gift of God to desire, hunger after Christ ; let desires put you upon endeavours : the work itself is sweet : yea, repentance itself hath more sweetness in it, than all the world's comforts. Upon repentance and believing comes jus-

tification ; after this sanctification, by the Spirit dwelling in us. Thus we come to be the children of God, to be made partakers of the divine nature, to lead new lives, to have a suitableness to God. It is unworthy of a Christian to have such a narrow spirit as not to act for Christ with all his heart, and soul, and strength, and might. Be not ashamed of Christ ; be not afraid of the frowns and jeers of the wicked. Be sure to keep a conscience void of offence, and yield by no means to any known sin ; be much in prayer, in secret prayer, and in reading the Scriptures. Therein are laid up the glorious mysteries which are hid from many eyes. My greatest desire is, that God would work his own great work in you. I desire to see you not as formerly, but that the Lord would make me an instrument of your soul's good, for which I greatly long."

CHAPTER IV.

HE wrote many letters of this nature, and desired oftentimes to visit his brethren, that he might particularly address himself to them, and see what became of his letters, prayers, and tears ; and he was very watchful over them, ready to reprove and convince them of sin, and ready to encourage any beginnings of a good work in them. To instance in a particular or two.

One time, perceiving one of his brothers asleep

at prayer in the family, he took occasion to show him what a high contempt it was of God; what a little sense such a man must have of his own danger; what dreadful hypocrisy; what a miracle of patience, that he was not awakened in flames. After he had been awhile affectionately pleading with him, it pleased the Lord to strike in with some power, and to melt and soften his brother's heart, (he was about eleven years old,) so that it was to be hoped that then the Lord began savingly to work upon the heart of that child. For from that time a considerable alteration might be discerned in him. When he perceived it, he was not a little pleased. This put him upon carrying on the work, that conviction might not wear off till it ended in conversion. To this end he wrote to him to put him in mind of what God had done for his soul, begging of him not to rest satisfied till he knew what a thorough change of heart meant. "I hope," said he, "that God hath a good work to do in you, for you, and by you; yea, I hope he hath already begun it. But O, take not up with some beginnings, faint desires, lazy seekings. Remember your former tears. One may weep a little for sin, and yet go to hell for sin; many that are under some such work shake off the sense of it, murder their convictions, and return again to folly. Take heed: if any draw back, the Lord will take no pleasure in them. But I hope better things of you."

He would also observe how his brethren carried it after duty; whether they seemed to run presently to the world with greediness, as if duty were a task, or whether there seemed to be an abiding impression of God and the things of God upon them.

His vehement love and compassion to souls may be further judged of by these following expressions, which he used to one of his relations, after he had been speaking how infinitely it was below a Christian to pursue with greediness the things which will be but as gravel in the teeth, if we mind not the rich provision which is in our Father's house:—"O, what folly is it to trifle in the things of God! But I hope better things of you. Did I not hope, why should I not mourn in secret for you as one cast out among the dead? O, what should I do for you but pour out my soul like water, and give my God no rest till he should graciously visit you with his salvation? till he cast you down, and raise you up; till he wound you, and heal you again!"

Thus by his holy example, warm and wise exhortations, prayers, tears, and secret groans, somewhat of the beauty of religion was to be seen in the family where he lived.

CHAPTER V.

HE was mighty in prayer ; and his spirit was oftentimes so transported in it, that he forgot the weakness of his own body and of other spirits. Indeed the acquaintance that he had with God was so sweet, and his converse with him so frequent, that when he was engaged in duty, he scarcely knew how to leave that which was so delightful and suited to his spirit. His constant course for some years was this : he prayed at least three times a day in secret, sometimes seven times ; twice a day in the family or college. He found the sweetness of it beyond imagination, and enjoyed wonderful communion with God, and tasted much of the pleasantness of a heavenly life. And he could say by experience, that the ways of Wisdom were ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace. He knew what it was to wrestle with God ; and he could scarce come off his knees without his Father's blessing. He was used to converse with God with a holy familiarity, as a friend ; would upon all occasions run to him for advice ; and had many strange and immediate answers of prayer. Of one of these I think it not altogether impertinent to give the world an account.

His honoured father, Mr. William Janeway, Minister of Kelshal in Hertfordshire, being sick,

and under somewhat dark apprehensions as to the state of his soul, he would often say to his son John, "O son! this passing upon eternity is a great thing; this dying is a solemn business; and enough to make any one's heart ache, that hath not his pardon sealed, and his evidences for heaven clear. And truly I am under no small fears as to my own estate for another world. O that God would clear his love! O that I could say cheerfully, I can die; and upon good grounds be able to look death in the face, and venture upon eternity with well-grounded peace and comfort."

His dutiful son made a suitable reply at the time; but seeing his dear father continuing under despondings of spirit, (though there were no Christians that knew him, but had a high esteem of him for his uprightness,) he got by himself, and spent some time in wrestling with God upon his father's account, earnestly begging of God that he would fill him with joy unspeakable in believing; and that he would speedily give him some token for good, that he might joyfully and honourably leave this world to go to a better. After he was risen from his knees, he came to his sick father, and asked him how he felt himself. His father made him no answer for some time, but wept exceedingly; (a thing that he was not subject to;) and continued for some considerable time in an extraordinary passion of weeping, so that he was not able to speak. But at last having re-

covered himself, with unspeakable joy, he burst out into such expressions as these:—"O son! now it is come; it is come; it is come! I bless God, I can die; the Spirit of God hath witnessed with my spirit that I am his child. Now I can look up to God as my Father, and Christ as my Redeemer. I can now say, This is my Friend, and this is my Beloved. My heart is full, it is brim full; I can hold no more. I know now what that sentence means, 'the peace of God which passeth understanding.' I know now what that white stone is, wherein a new name is written, which none know but they who have it. And that fit of weeping, which you saw me in, was a fit of overpowering love and joy, so great that I could not contain myself. Neither can I express what glorious discoveries God hath made of himself to me. And had that joy been greater, I question whether I could have borne it, and whether it would not have separated soul and body. Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me, bless his holy name, that hath pardoned all my sins, and sealed the pardon. He hath healed my wounds, and caused the bones which he had broken to rejoice. O help me to bless the Lord! He hath put a new song into my mouth. O bless the Lord for his infinite goodness and mercy! Now I can die! It is nothing. I bless God that I can die. I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." You may well think that his son's heart

was not a little refreshed to hear such words, and see such a sight, and to meet the messenger that he had sent to heaven, returned back again so speedily. He counted himself a sharer with his father in this mercy ; and it was upon a double account welcome, as it did so wonderfully satisfy his father, and as it was so immediate and clear an answer of his own prayers, as if God had from heaven said unto him, “Thy tears and prayers are heard for thy father. Thou hast like a Prince prevailed with God ; thou hast obtained the blessing. Thy fervent prayers have been effectual. Go down and see.”

Upon this, this blessed young man broke forth into praises, and even into another ecstasy of joy, that God should deal so mercifully with him ; and the father and son together were so full of joy, light, life, love, and praise, that there was a little heaven in the place. He could not then but express himself in this manner :—“O blessed, and for ever blessed, be God for his infinite grace ! Who would not pray unto God ? Verily he is a God that heareth prayer, and that my soul knows right well.” And then he told his joyful father, how much he was affected with his former despondings, and what he had been praying for just before with all the earnestness he could for his soul, and how the Lord had immediately answered him. His father hearing this, and perceiving that his former comforts came in a way of

prayer, and his own child's prayer too, was the more refreshed, and was the more confirmed that it was from the Spirit of God. Immediately his son standing by, he fell into another fit of triumphing joy, his weak body being almost ready to sink under that great weight of glory that did shine so powerfully upon his soul. He could then say, "Now let thy servant depart in peace ; for my eyes have seen thy salvation." He could now walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no evil. O how sweet a thing it is to have one's interest in Christ cleared ; how comfortable, to have our calling and election made sure ! How lovely is the sight of a smiling Jesus when one is dying ! How refreshing is it, when heart and flesh and all are failing, to have God for the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever ! O did the foolish unexperienced world but know what these things mean ; did they but understand what it is to be solaced with the believing views of glory, to have their senses spiritually exercised ; could they but taste and see how good the Lord is, it would soon cause them to disrelish their low and brutish pleasures, and look upon all worldly joys as infinitely short of one glimpse of God's love.

After this, his reverend father had a sweet calm upon his spirits, and went in the strength of that provision, till he came within the gates of the new Jerusalem : having all his graces greatly

improved, he showed so much humility, love to and admiring of God, contempt of the world, such prizing of Christ, such patience, as few Christians arrive to; especially his faith, by which with extraordinary confidence he cast his widow and eleven fatherless children upon the care of that God who had fed him with this manna in his wilderness-state. The benefit of which faith all his children (none of which were in his lifetime provided for) have since to admiration experienced. And it is scarcely to be imagined how helpful his son John Janeway was to his father by his heavenly discourse, humble advice, and prayers. After a four months' conflict with a painful consumption and hectic fever, his honoured father sweetly slept in Jesus.

CHAPTER VI.

AFTER the death of his father, he did what he could to supply his absence, doing the part of husband, son, brother: so that he was no small comfort to his poor mother in her disconsolate state, and all the rest of his relations that had any sense of God upon their spirits. To one of them he thus addressed himself, upon the death of a child:—

“Daily observation, and every man’s experi-

once, give sufficient testimony, that afflictions, of what kind soever, by how much the seldomer they are, the more grievous they seem. We have of a long time sailed in the rivers of blessing which God hath plentifully poured forth among us. Now if we come where the waves of affliction do but a little more than ordinarily arise, we begin to have our souls almost carried down with fears and griefs ; yea, the natural man, if not restrained by the Spirit of God, will be ready to entertain murmuring and repining thoughts against God himself. Whereas, if all our life had been a pilgrimage full of sorrows and afflictions, (as we deserved,) and had rarely been intermingled with comforts, we should have been more fitted to bear afflictions. Thus it is naturally : but we ought to resist the stream of nature, by a new principle wrought in us ; and whatsoever nature doth err in, grace is to rectify. And they upon whom grace is bestowed ought to set grace on work. For wherefore is grace bestowed unless that it should act in us ? It hath pleased the Lord to make a breach in your family. Where the knot is fastest tied, when it is disunited, the change becomes greatest, and the grief is the more enlarged. So that herein you who are most moved are most to be excused and comforted : the strength of a mother's affections I believe none but mothers know ; and greatest affections, when they are disturbed, breed the greatest grief.

But when afflictions come upon us, what will be our duty? Shall we then give ourselves up to be carried away with the grieving passions? Shall we, because of one affliction, cause our souls to walk in sadness all our days, and drive away all the light of comfort from our eyes, by causing our souls to be obscured under the shades of melancholy? Shall we quarrel with our Maker, and call the wise righteous Judge to our bar? Doth he not punish us less than we deserve? Is there not mercy and truth in all his dispensations? Shall we by continual sorrow add affliction to affliction, and so become our own tormentors? Are we not rather under afflictions to see if we may find a glimpse of God's love shining towards us, and so to raise up our souls nearer God? Is there not enough in God and the holy Scriptures to bear up our spirits under any afflictions, let them never be so great? What do you say to that word: 'Who is there among you that feareth the Lord, and that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and seeth no light; let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God?' Though all earthly comforts were fled away, and though you could see no light from any of these things below; yet if we look upward to God in Christ, there is comfort to be found, there is light to be espied; yea, a great and glorious light, which if we can rightly discern, it would put out the light

of all lower comforts, and cause them to be vilely accounted of. But alas! those heavenly comforts, though they are in themselves so precious, and if really and sensibly felt able to raise a man's soul from earth, yea, from hell, to the foretaste of heaven itself; yet, for want of a spiritual sense, they are by most of the world undervalued, slighted, and thought to be but fancies. Nay, let me speak freely. Christians themselves, and those whom we have cause to hope are men of another world and truly born again, yet for want of a spiritual quickness in this spiritual sight and sense, these comforts are too lowly and meanly esteemed.

“It is a spiritual sense that enableth a Christian to behold a glorious lustre and beauty in invisibles, and raiseth the soul up to the gate of heaven itself; and when he is there, how can he choose but look down with a holy contempt upon the sweetest of all earthly enjoyments? How can he choose but think all creature-comforts but small, compared with one look of love from Christ? This heavenly comfort was that which David did so much desire. ‘Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon me,’ was the language of his soul; and when this was come, how was his heart enlarged! ‘Thou hast put joy and gladness in my heart more than in the time when their corn and wine increased.’ He then that in afflictions would find comfort, must strive to see

thence, that the Lord does not love you? No, surely; but rather the contrary; for 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. What son is he whom the father chasteneth not? Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.'

"Let this serve as a remedy against excessive grief. Get your love to God increased; which if you do, the love of all other things will wax cold. And if you have given God your heart, you will give him leave to take what he will that is yours; and what he hath, you will judge rather well kept than lost.

"Remember that scripture, and' let it have its due impression upon your spirit: 'He that loveth father or mother, brother or sister, yea, or children, more than me, is not worthy of me.' O labour to have your affections therefore more raised up to him who is most worthy of them; let him have the uppermost and greatest room in your heart; and let your love to all other things be placed in subjection to your love of God, be ruled by it, and directed to it. Be our earthly afflictions never so great, yet let this love to God poise our souls so, that they may not be overweighed with grief on the one side, or stupidity on the other. Let our souls be awed by that glorious power and omnipotence of God, who is able to do any thing, and who will do whatsoever pleaseth him both in

heaven and in earth ; at whose word, and for whose glory, all things that are, were made. And what are we, poor creatures, that we should dare to entertain any hard thought of this God ? It is dangerous contending with God. Let us learn that great lesson of resigning up ourselves and all we have to God ; let us put ourselves as instruments into the hands of the Lord, to do what he pleaseth with us ; and let us remember that it was our promise and covenant with God to yield ourselves up to him, and to be wholly at his disposal. The soul is then in a sweet frame when it can cordially say, ' It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good in his eyes. Not my will, but thine be done.' Again, let us know, that though we cannot always see into the reasonableness of the ways of God ; (for his ways are often in the thick cloud, and our weak eyes cannot look into those depths in which he walketh ;) yet all the ways of God are just, holy, and good. Let us therefore have a care of so much as moving, much more of entertaining any unworthy thoughts, against God. But let us submit willingly to the yoke which he is pleased to lay upon us, lest he break us with his terrible judgments. And now it hath seemed good to God to lay this stroke upon you, I pray labour rightly to improve it, and let this trial prepare you for a greater. And seeing the uncertainty of all worldly things, endeavour with all your might to get your heart above them ; and I beseech the Lord, who is

the great Physician of souls, and knows how to apply a healing balm to every sore, to comfort you with his spiritual comforts; that he would favourably shine upon you, and receive you into a near union and communion with himself. Into his hands I commit you; with him I leave you, praying that he would make up all in himself."

He was an excellent example to his younger brethren; and his wise instructions and holy practices did not a little influence them. He was a prudent counsellor, and an assistant that could not well be spared to his eldest brother, who was not a little sensible of that personal worth that was in his younger brother, whom he would prefer before himself, as one whom he judged God honoured with far greater parts, graces, and experience than himself. The younger also did as humbly and heartily respect and honour him, as a serious Christian, a Minister, and his elder brother, who had obliged him with more than ordinary kindness.

When he was but young, he began to be taken notice of by aged Ministers and Christians; though his modesty was so great, that his parts were not a little obscured thereby; and his vast worth was so balanced with humility, that he made no great noise in the world, and most were ignorant of his singular worth. A wise man, who was intimately acquainted with him, would say of him, that he was like deep waters that were most still, a man of hidden excellency. There were few that knew

how closely he walked with God, and at what a high rate he lived, and how great a trade he carried on for the riches of that other world : all which he laboured, as much as might be, to conceal.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN his father was dead, he returned to King's College, and was a member of a secret society which began to carry on noble projects for Christ and souls, and to plot how they might best improve their gifts and graces, so as that they might be most serviceable to God and their generation. Their custom was frequently to meet together, to pray, and to communicate studies and experience, and to handle some question of divinity, or in some scholastic way to exercise the gifts which God had given them. Some of this company degenerated ; but others lived to let the world understand, that what they did was from a vital principle. Amongst them this young man was none of the least ; who had a design upon some of the juniors, to engage them, if possible, before they were ensnared by wicked company, when they came fresh from school. After some time, most of his companions were transplanted either into gentlemen's families or livings ; and this Mr. Janeway, being one of the youngest, was, for a while, left alone in the

College. But he, wanting the comfortable diversion of suitable godly society, fixed so intensely upon his studies, that he soon gave such a wound to his bodily constitution, as could never thoroughly be healed.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER a while Dr. Cox, wanting a Tutor for his son in his house, sent to the Provost of the College, to make choice of a man of true worth for him : in answer to whose request, the Provost was pleased to send Mr. Janeway, who did neither shame him that preferred him, nor disappoint the expectations of him that entertained him ; but, by his diligence, profound learning, and success in his undertaking, did not a little oblige the relations of his pupil. But his pains were so great, and his body so weak, that it could not longer bear up under such work ; so that he was forced to ask leave of the Doctor, to try whether a change of air might not contribute somewhat to the mending the temper of his body, which now began sensibly to decay.

Whilst he was in that family, his carriage was so sweet and obliging, and his conversation so spiritual, that it did not a little endear his presence to them : so that I question not but some of that family will carry a sweet remembrance of him along with them to their graves ; and I often heard

him own the goodness of God to him, in the benefit that he received, by the graces and experience of some Christians in that family, whose tender love to him he gratefully acknowledged upon his death-bed.

CHAPTER IX.

HE left the Doctor's house, and retired into the country, to his mother and eldest brother, who did not spare to use their utmost diligence and tenderness to recruit the decays of nature ; but hard study, frequent and earnest prayers, and long and intense meditations, had so ruined this frail tabernacle, that it could not be fully repaired : yet, by God's blessing upon care and art, it was propped for some time.

Whilst he was in this declining condition, in which he could have little hope of life, he was so far from being affrighted, that he received the sentence of death in himself with great joy, and wrote to his dearest relations to dispose them to a patient compliance with such a dispensation as might separate him and them for a while. To wean their affections from him, he solemnly professed, that, as for himself, he was ashamed to desire and pray for life. "O," said he, "is there any thing here more desirable than the enjoyment of Christ? Can I expect any thing below comparable

to that blessed vision? O that crown! that rest which remains for the people of God! and (blessed be God) I can say, I know it is mine. I know that when this tabernacle of clay shall be dissolved, I have a house not made with hands; and therefore I groan, not to be unclothed, but to be clothed with Christ. 'To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' I can now, through infinite mercy, speak in the Apostle's language, 'I have fought a good fight; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown, incorruptible, that fadeth not away.'"

When he perceived one of his nearest relations distressed at the apprehension of his death, he charged him not to pray for his life, except it were purely with a respect to the glory of God. "I wish," said he, "I beg you, to keep your minds in a submissive frame to the will of God concerning me. The Lord take you nearer to himself, that you may walk with him; to whom if I go before, I hope you will follow after." Yet after this, he was through mercy finely recovered, and his friends were not without hope of his living to be eminently instrumental for God's glory in his generation.

After he was recovered in some measure, he fell again to his former practice of engaging deeply in the secret and great duties of religion, which he constantly practised, except when God discharged him by sickness: secret prayer, at least three times a day, sometimes seven times, yea; more. Beside family and college duties, which

were before hinted, he set apart an hour every day for set and solemn meditation ; which duty he found to improve his graces, and to make no small addition to his comfort. His time for that duty was most commonly in the evening, when he usually walked into the field, if the weather would permit ; if not, he retired into the church, or any solitary room. Observing his constant practice, that, if possible, I might be acquainted with the reason of his retiredness, I once hid my self, that I might take the more exact notice of the intercourse that I judged was kept up between him and God. But, O what a spectacle did I see ! Surely, a man walking with God, conversing intimately with his Maker, and maintaining a holy familiarity with the great Jehovah. I thought I saw one talking with God ; I thought I saw a spiritual merchant in a heavenly exchange, driving a rich trade for the treasures of the other world. O what a glorious sight it was ! Methinks I see him still. How sweetly did his face shine ! O with what a lovely countenance did he walk up and down, his lips going, his body oft reaching up, as if he would have taken his flight into heaven ! His looks, smiles, and every motion spake him to be upon the very confines of glory. Surely he had meat to eat which the world knew not of ! Did we but know how welcome God made him when he brought him into his banquet-house ! That which one might easily perceive

his heart to be most fixed upon, was, the infinite love of God in Christ to the poor lost sons and daughters of Adam. What else meant his high expressions? What else did his own words signify, but an extraordinary sense of the freeness, fulness, and duration of that love? To use his own words, "God holds mine eyes most upon his goodness, his unmeasurable goodness, and the promises which are most sure and firm in Christ. His love to us is greater, surer, fuller than ours to ourselves. For when we loved ourselves so as to destroy ourselves, he loved us so as to save us."

CHAPTER X.

THAT he might engage others in more ardent affections to God, he put words into their mouths. "Let us then," said he, "behold Him, till our hearts' desire, till our very souls are drawn out after him; till we are brought to acquaintance, intimacy, delight in him! O that he would love me! O that I might love him! O blessed are they that know him, and are known of him! It is good for me to draw near to God. A day in his courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. My soul longeth, yea, fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. O that I were received into

converse with him, that I might hear his voice, and see his countenance! For his voice is sweet, and his countenance is comely. O that I might communicate myself to God, and that he would give himself to me! O that I might love him! that I were sick of love, that I might die in love! that I may lose myself in his love, as a small drop in the unfathomable depth of his love! that I might dwell in his eternal love!" "O," saith he to a dear friend under some fears as to his state, "stand still and wonder. Behold his love, and admire. Consider what thou canst discover in Jesus. Canst thou not see so much till thou canst see no more; not because of its shortness, but because of thy darkness?"

"Here is a sea: throw thyself into it, and thou shalt be compassed with the height, and depth, and breadth, and length of love, and be filled with all the fulness of God? Is not this enough? What wouldest thou have more? Fling away all besides God. God is portion enough, and the only proper portion of the soul. Hast thou not tasted, hast thou not known, that his love is better than wine? Hast thou not smelt the savour of his precious ointments, for which the virgins love him? This, this is He who is altogether lovely. While I write, my heart burns; my soul is on fire; I am sick of love.

"Come near and look upon his face. Fall upon him, embrace him, give him thy dearest,

choicest love ; all is too little for him. Fix thine eyes again and again upon him, till thou art taken with this person, who hath not his fellow upon the earth, his equal among the angels. Come near, still contemplate his excellency ; review each part ; and thou wilt find him to be made up of love. Wind thy affections about him ; bind thy soul to him with the cords of love. Thus shalt thou find a new life to animate thy soul ; thou shalt then feel a new warmth to melt thy heart ; a divine fire to burn up corruption, and to break forth into a flame of heavenly love. Dwell in this love, and thou shalt dwell in God, and God in thee. I see you almost all in tears, because thou feelest not such workings of love towards God. Weep on still ; for love hath tears as well as grief : and tears of love shall be kept in his bottle, as well as they ; yea, they shall be as precious jewels, and as an excellent ornament. Hast thou felt such meltings of loving grief ? Know, that they are no other than the streams of Christ's love flowing to you, and through you, and from you, to him again.

“I have prayed for a blessing for you, and on those related to you ; and if they prove of any power by the Spirit of God to you, it will be matter of joy and praise.”

CHAPTER XI.

THUS you have a taste of his spirit, and may perceive what it was that his heart was most set upon, and what kept his graces in such vigour and activity, and how desirous he was that others should be sharers with him in this mercy. Yet for all this he had his gloomy days ; the sun was sometimes overcast ; his sweets were sometimes embittered with dreadful and horrid temptations. The devil shot his poisonous arrows at him ; yet, through the Captain of his salvation, he came more than a conqueror out of the field. He was, with Paul, many times, lifted up into the third heavens, and saw and heard things unutterable. But, lest he should be exalted above measure, there was a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him.

It would make a Christian's heart ache to hear what strange temptations he was exercised with. But he was well armed for such a conflict, having the shield of faith, whereby he quenched the fiery darts of that wicked one : yet, this fight cost him the sweating of his very body for agonies of spirit, and tears and strong cries to heaven for help. As for himself, he was wont to take an arrow out of God's quiver, and discharge it by faith and prayer for the discomfiture of his violent enemy, who at last was fain to fly.

These temptations and conflicts with Satan did

not a little help him afterwards in his dealing with one that was sorely afflicted with temptations of the like nature. And because I judge it of singular use to tempted ones, I shall insert a letter of his, suitable to all Christians in the like case.

“DEAR FRIEND,

“YOUR letters contain matter of joy, under a dismal aspect: they are good news, brought by a messenger in mourning. I had rather hear of that which is matter of substantial joy, though mixed with many sighs, and interrupted with many groans and sobs, than of that laughter in the midst of which the heart is sad.

“You say, that you are troubled with blasphemous thoughts: so then, though they are blasphemous, they are your trouble; and thoughts they are too, and that neither sent for, nor welcome; and so are not assented to in your mind. What then shall we think of them? If they were of your own production, your heart would be delighted in its own issue: but you do nothing less. Sure then, they are the injections of that wicked one, who is the accuser of the brethren, and the disturber of the peace of the people of God. But doth Satan use to employ those weapons only against such he is in some fear of losing? He is not wont to assault and fight against his surest friends in this manner. Those

that he hath fast in his own possession, he leads on as softly and quietly as he can; fearing lest such disturbance should make them look about them, and so they should awake, and see their danger. But as for those that have in some measure escaped his snares, he follows them hard, with all the discouragements he can. Surely, these things can be no other but a bitter relish of those things which you know to be bitter after that you have tasted the honey and the honeycomb; after you have seen how good the Lord is. What then shall I call these motions of your mind? They are the soul's loathing the morsels which Satan would have it to swallow down; yea, they are the soul's striving with Satan. And let the enemy of all goodness know, that he shall, ere long, pay dearly for such attempts. But you will say, if these horrible thoughts be not your sin, they are your trouble and misery, and you desire to be free from them. The most loyal and loving spouse had rather be delivered from those assaults. But you will ask, How shall I get free from them?—First, see that you possess your soul in patience; and know this, that God hath an overruling hand in all this; and wait upon him, for he can and will bring forth good out of all this seeming evil. Trust in the Lord, and stay yourself upon your God. Can Christ forget the purchase of his own blood, the price of his soul, whom he hath so intimately endeared to

himself? Can a mother forget her sucking child? Yet, God cannot forget his. God hath loving and gracious intents in all this, and his bowels yearn towards his children. Yea, our Saviour suffers with us, through his ardent love by sympathy, as well as he hath suffered for us. But, for your being rid of these thoughts, you know who hath all power in his hand, who doth employ this power in a way of love towards his. This power is made yours through the prayer of faith. But for your own work, do this:—

“First, Let no such thoughts have any time of abode in your mind, but turn them out with all the loathing and abhorrence you can: but not with so much trouble and disturbance of mind as I believe you do. For by this the devil is pleased, and he makes you your own tormentor.

“Secondly, Always then divert your thoughts to some good thing, and let those very injections be constantly the occasion of your more spiritual meditation. Think the quite contrary, or fall a praying with earnestness; and the devil will be weary if he finds his designs thus broken, and that those sparks of hell (which he struck into the soul to kindle and inflame corruption) put warmth into grace, and set faith and prayer a working. When he perceives, that what he intended as water to cool your love to God, proves like oil to make it flame the more vehemently, he will be discouraged. Thus resist him, and he will flee from you.

“Thirdly, Consider that this is no new thing. For, we are not in this ignorant of Satan’s wiles, that, if any soul hath escaped out of the chains of darkness, if he will have heaven, he shall have it with as much trouble as the devil can lay on; and, if he and his had their wills, no good man should have one peaceable hour. But blessed be God for his love to his people, that the devil cannot pluck us out of those almighty arms, with which he doth embrace his children.

“My prayer for thee is, that God would give thee the peaceable fruit of righteousness, after all thy afflictions, and that thou mayest come out of these trials, refined and purified, and more fit for thy Master’s use; having this the end of all, to purge away thy dross, and take away thy sin.

“Thus hoping that at length God will turn thy mourning into joy, thy trouble into triumph, and all thy sorrows into a sure and stable peace, I leave you with him, and rest

“Yours in our Lord.”

He was much afraid of any decays in grace, of apostasy, yea, of flatness of spirit, either in himself or others; and if he suspected any thing of this nature in his nearest relations, he would do what he could to recover them out of the snares of Satan, and to quicken them to higher and more vigorous spiritual acts of religion. He laboured to maintain a constant tenderness and

sensibility upon his heart; and to take notice of the least departure of his soul from God. He had a godly jealousy over his brothers: one of whom was awaked by his serious and particular application of himself to him, when he was about eleven years old. But he knew, that conviction and conversion are two things; and that many are somewhat affected by a warm exhortation, who quickly lose those impressions, and return to their former trifling with God, and neglect of their souls. Wherefore he desired to carry on the work that he had some hopes was well begun. He laboured to build sure and build up; that he might be rooted and grounded in the faith steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Wherefore he followed him, not only with private warnings, and frequent pathetic counsels and directions, but with letters, one of which spoke in this language:—

. “You live in a place where strict and close walking with God hath few or no examples, and most are apt to be like their company; and God’s own children are too apt to forget their first love. Our hearts are apt to be careless, and neglect our watch. We are ready to grow formal in duty, or less spiritual; and then, it may be, less frequent. Conscience is put off with some poor excuse, and thus religion withers, and one that seemed once a zealot may become a Laodicean; some that looked once as if they were eminent saints

may fall to just nothing. It is too common to have a name to be alive and yet to be dead. Read this, and tremble, lest it should be your case. When we are lazy and asleep, our adversary is awake. When we are slothful and negligent, then he is diligent. I consider your age; I know where you dwell; I am not unacquainted with your temptations. Wherefore I cannot but be afraid of you, lest by both inward and outward fire the bush be singed.

“Give me leave to be in some measure fearful of you, and jealous over you; and to remind you of what you know already. Principles of civility will be but as broken reeds to stay our souls upon, without those higher principles which are planted in the soul by the working of the Spirit of God. O remember what meltings sometimes you have had; remember how solicitously you did inquire after Christ; how earnestly you seemed to ask the way to Zion with your face thitherward. Take heed of losing those impressions you once had; take not up with a slight work. True conversion is a great thing, and another kind of business than most of the world take it to be. Therefore, be not satisfied with some convictions, taking them for conversion; much less with resting in a formal, lifeless profession.

“There is such a thing as being almost a Christian; nay, as drawing back unto perdition: and some that are not far from the kingdom of

heaven may never come there. Beware lest you lose the reward. The promise is made to him that holdeth fast, and holdeth out unto the end, and overcometh.

“Labour to forget what is behind, and to press forwards toward things that are before. He that is contented with just grace enough to get to heaven, and escape hell, and desires no more, may be sure he hath none at all; and is far from being made partaker of the divine nature. Labour to know what it is to converse with God; strive to do everything as in his presence; design him in all; act as one that stands within sight of the grave and eternity. I say again, do what you do, as if you were sure God stood by and looked upon you, and exactly observed and recorded every thought, word, and action; and you may very well suppose that which cannot be otherwise.

“Let us awake, and fall to our work in good earnest. Heaven or hell are before us, and death behind. What! do we mean to sleep? Dulness in God’s service is very uncomfortable. To be contented with such a frame, is a certain symptom of a hypocrite. O how will such tremble when God shall call them to give an account of their stewardship, and tell them they may no longer be stewards! Should they fall sick, and the devil and conscience fall upon them, what inconceivable perplexity would they then be in!

“O live more upon invisible things, and let the thoughts of their excellency put life into your performances. You must be contented to be laughed at for preciseness and singularity. A Christian’s walking is not with men, but with God; and he hath great cause to suspect his love to God, who doth not delight more in conversing with God and being conformed to Him, than in conversing with the world and being conformed to it.

“How can the love of God dwell in that man who liveth without God in the world? without both continual walking with him in his whole conversation, and those more peculiar visits of him in prayer, meditations, spiritual ejaculations, and other duties of religion; and the workings of faith, love, holy desires, delight, joy, and spiritual sorrow in them! Think not that our walking with God cannot consist with worldly business. Religion makes us spiritual in common actions; and there is not any action in a man’s life, in which a man is not to labour to make it a religious act, by a looking to the rule in it, and eyeing of God’s glory; and thus, he may be said to walk with God. To this we must endeavour to rise, and be never content till we reach to it; and if this seems tedious, (as to degenerate nature it will,) we must know that we have so much of enmity against God still remaining, and are under depravation and darkness, and

know not our true happiness. Such a soul is sick, and it hath lost its taste, which doth not perceive an incomparable sweetness in walking with God, without whom all things else under heaven are gall and bitterness, and to be little valued by every true Christian.

“ Yet we are all apt, even at the worst, to say, that we prefer God above all things. But we must know, that we have very deceitful hearts; and those who, being enlightened, know for what high ends they should act, and what a fearful condition even a hazard in our case is, will not believe their own hearts without diligent search and good grounds.

“ Rest not in any condition, in which your security is not founded upon that sure foundation, the Lord Jesus Christ. Labour to attain to this, to love God, and to have your heart naturalized and suited to spiritual things. O for a heart to rejoice and work righteousness! O that we could do the will of God with more activity, delight, and constancy! If we did know more of God, we should love him more: then God would still reveal more of himself to us; and then we should see more and more cause to love him, and wonder that we love him no more. This, this is our happiness, to have a fuller sight of God, to be wrapped up, and filled with the love of Christ! Let my soul for ever be thus employed! Lord, whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is

none in earth that I can desire in comparison of thee."

You hear, what kind of language he spake ; and you may easily perceive what it was that swallowed up his heart, and where his delight, treasure, and life was. How much do most of us, who go for Christians, fall short of these things ! How vast a distance there is between his experience and ours ! What reason have we to read these lines with blushing, and to blot the paper with tears ! and to lay aside this book a while, fall upon our faces before the Lord, bemoan the cursed unsuitableness of our hearts to God, and to bewail that we so little understand what this walking with God and living by faith means ! At what a rate do some Christians live ! And how low, flat, and dull are others ! His love to Christ and souls made him very desirous to spend, and be spent, in the work of the ministry : accordingly he complied with the first loud and clear call to preach the everlasting Gospel ; and though he was but about two-and-twenty years old, yet he came to that work like one that understood what kind of employment preaching was. He was a workman that needed not to be ashamed, that was thoroughly furnished for every good word and work ; one that was able to answer gainsayers ; one in whom the word of God dwelt richly ; one full of the Spirit and power ; one that hated sin with a perfect hatred, and loved

holiness with all his soul ; in whom religion in its beauty did shine ; one that knew the terrors of the Lord, and knew how to beseech sinners in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God ; one that was a son of thunder, and a son of consolation. In a word, I may speak that of him which Paul spake of Timothy, that I knew none like-minded, that did naturally care for souls. And had he lived to preach often, O what use might such a man have been of in his generation ! one, in whom learning and holiness did, as it were, strive which should excel. He never preached publicly but twice ; and then he came to it as if he had been used to that work forty years, delivering the word of God with that power and majesty, with that tenderness and compassion, with that readiness and freedom, that it made his hearers almost amazed. He was led into the mystery of the Gospel, and he spoke nothing to others but what was the language of his heart, the fruit of great experience, and which one might easily perceive had made no small impression first upon his own spirit.

His first and last sermons were upon communion and intimate converse with God, out of Job xxii. 21 : a subject that few Christians under heaven were better able to manage than himself, and that scarcely any could handle so feelingly as he. For he did for some considerable time maintain such an intimate familiarity with

God, that he seemed to converse with him, as one friend converses with another. This text he made some entrance into whilst he was here. But the perfecting of his acquaintance with God was a work fitter for another world.

He was one that kept an exact watch over his thoughts, and words, and actions; and made a review of all that passed him, at least once a day, in a solemn manner. He kept a diary, in which he wrote down every evening what the frame of his spirit had been all the day long, especially in every duty. He took notice what incomes and profit he received in his spiritual traffic; what returns from that far country; what answers of prayer; what deadness and flatness; and what observable providences presented themselves, and the substance of what he had been doing: and any wanderings of thoughts, inordinacy in any passion; which though the world could not discern, he could. It cannot be conceived by them which do not practise the same, to what a good account did this return. This made him to retain a grateful remembrance of mercy, and to live in a constant admiring and adoring of divine goodness; this brought him to a very intimate acquaintance with his own heart; this kept his spirit low, and fitted him for free communications from God; this made him more lively and active; this helped him to walk humbly with God; this made him speak more affectionately and experi-

mentally to others of the things of God ; and, in a word, this left a sweet calm upon his spirit, because he every night made even his accounts ; and if his sheets should prove his winding-sheet, it had been all one ; for he could say his work was done ; so that death could not surprise him.

Could this book of his experience, and register of his actions, have been read, it might have contributed much to the completing of this discourse, and the quickening of some, and the comforting of others. But these things being written in characters, the world hath lost that jewel.

He studied the Scriptures much, and they were sweeter to him than his food. He had an excellent faculty in opening the mind of God in dark places.

In the latter part of his life he seemed quite swallowed up with the thoughts of Christ, heaven, and eternity ; and the nearer he came to this, the more swift his motion was to it, and the more unmixed his designs for it. He would much persuade others to a respect to the glory of God in all things ; making religion one's business ; and not to mind these great things by the by.

CHAPTER XII.

HE was not a little concerned about Ministers; that, above all men, they should take heed, lest they carried on poor low designs, instead of wholly eying of the interest of God and souls. He judged, that to take up preaching as a trade, was altogether inconsistent with the high spirit of a true Gospel Minister. He desired that those which seemed to be devoted to the ministry would be such, first, heartily to devote their all to God; and then that they should endeavour to have a tender love to immortal souls.

He was very ready to debase himself; and humbly to acknowledge what he found amiss in himself; and he laboured to amend himself and others. "This," saith he, "I must seriously confess, that I must needs reproach myself for deficiency in a Christian spiritual remembrance of you," (speaking to a dear friend,) "and for a decay in a quick tender touch, as of other things, so of what relates to yourself in the spirituality of it. Not that I think not of you or of God; but that my thoughts of you and spiritual things are not so frequent, savoury, and affectionate, as they ought to be.

"By this reflection you may easily perceive, that I see farther in duty than I do in practice. The truth of it is, I grudge that thoughts and affections should run out any whither freely, but

to God. And what I now desire for myself, I desire for you likewise, that God would sweeten the fountain ; I mean, our natures ; that every drop flowing from thence may savour of something of God within. Thoughts are precious ; affections are more precious, the best that we are worth ; and when they flow in a wrong channel, all God's precious dispensations towards us are lost ; all that God hath spent upon us is lost, and spent in vanity. I speak this out of a kind respect to your soul and God's honour, who I am loath should be a loser by his kindnesses. I know you have many objects, upon which you may be apt to let out your affections : I say again, my jealousy is, lest (there being so many channels wherein they may run) God lose his due. I desire therefore, in humility and tenderness, that this may be as a hint to you from the Spirit of God, to look inwards to the frame and disposition of your soul, and to make trial thereof by the natural out-goings of your affections, and then expostulate the case with your own soul : 'If Christ have my warmest love, why is it thus with me ? If God have my heart, why am I so thoughtful about the world ? If I indeed love him best, how cometh it to pass, that I find more strong, delightful, constant actings of my affections towards my relations, myself, or any worldly thing, than I do after him ?' O the depth of the heart's deceitfulness !

“Dear and honoured friend, trust not to a surmise, trust not to a slight view of your heart, or the first apprehensions you may have of yourself; but go down into the secrets of your heart; try and fear, fear and try. An evidence is abundantly more worth, than all trouble that you can be at in the acquiring of it; and the trouble that there is good ground for in an unevidenced state, is far greater than that which may seem to be in searching for it. Yet, to an awakened soul, what is the trouble in clearing its evidences, but their sense or fear of their not being clear, and of the deceitfulness of their hearts? The reality of that evil, which tender souls so dread, lies in its full weight (though not felt) upon the drowsy ungroundedly secure sinner.

“I speak in love: give me leave to remember you of some touches that you had formerly upon your spirit under the means of grace; remember how much you were sometimes affected under preaching. Did you never say, that these sermons upon hardness of heart softened yours? Inquire, I pray, whether those convictions which were then upon your heart are not worn off by the incumbrances of the world. If, upon inquiry, you find that they are, it is high time for you to look about you, and repent; and not only to do your first works, but to strive to outgo them.

“I have with grief taken a review of the frame of my own spirit, when I was at your

house ; and I have no small sense of the distemper of my soul, whereby I was betrayed to too great an indifference in the things of God ; and, finding by sad experience, that I was more apt (amongst those carnal comforts and affairs) to lose that relish and savour of divine things that I was wont to have, and those delightful appearances of God which I was through rich grace acquainted with, while I was more sequestered from the world and earthly delights, not but that I find my heart, at the best, under the highest advantages of closest communion, too unwilling to endeavour after, and maintain that gracious sense and acknowledgment of God which I would fain obtain to ; I say, observing my own experience, and knowing that your heart was something akin to mine, fearing lest multiplicity of business should expose you also to the same hazard, Christian compassion could not but put me upon arming you against those temptations to which your occasions make you subject.

“ The desire of my soul for you is, that you may travel safely through a dangerous wilderness to a blessed Canaan ; that you may quit yourself like a Christian in the opposing and conquering all your enemies ; and, at last, come triumphing out of the field : and that you may behave yourself like a pilgrim and stranger in a far country, who is looking for a city that hath foundations ; and that we may meet together with joy at our

Father's house, and sit down with him in eternal glory. O that word 'glory' is so weighty, if we did believe it, that it would make the greatest diligence we can use to secure it seem light. O that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! O for more faith! Lord, increase our faith, and then there would be nothing wanting to make us put forth the utmost strength of our soul, and to improve every moment of time to catch hold of all advantages, and to make use of all means possible for the attainment of such glorious ends.

"But O these unbelieving hearts! let us join our complaints, and let us all break forth into bitter lamentations over them. May not we, with as good reason as that distressed father over his possessed child, bring our hearts into the presence of our Saviour, and cry out with tears, and say, that it is these unbelieving hearts, which sometimes cast us into the fire, and sometimes into the water? Yea, worse; every time we forsake God, and prefer any thing before him, we part with life for death, with heaven for hell.

"Give me leave to come yet a little nearer to you. What an advantage would a full persuasion of the truth and excellencies of Gospel discoveries bring to your soul, if you would but seriously, and with all your strength, drive on true spiritual designs! How easily might you then go under all your burdens! If your care for the things of this life were but rightly subordinate to the things of

eternity, how cheerfully might you go on with your business! If you sought first the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness thereof, then all other things would be added, so far as they are necessary or good for you.

“Let me therefore at this time put you upon that duty of raising your mind from earth to heaven, from the creature to the Creator, from the world to God. Indeed, it is matter of no small difficulty, to discover the disorder that is in our souls, when we are solicitous about temporary objects and employments: but there are few surer discoveries of it, than insensibility, and not complaining of it. For when the soul is indeed raised to spiritual objects, and to understand clearly its eternal interest; when it doth in good earnest take God for its portion, and prefer him above all; then it will quickly be sensible of its outgoings after other objects, and even grudge that any time should be taken up in the pursuit of the creature, and that any below God should be followed with earnest pleasure and constancy. It would do nothing else but love, serve, and enjoy God. For my own part I cannot but wonder that God will give us leave to love him. O blessed goodness! O infinite condescension! He is not ashamed to be called the God of those that believingly seek him. I am sensible in some measure of your burdens; and indeed that must needs be a burden that keeps the soul from

pursuing its chiefest good. My prayers for you are, that you may have such teachings from God as may make you understand how far heavenly things are more precious than earthly, and that you may with all your might seek, mind, and love that which hath most of true excellency in it, which hath the only ground of real comfort here, and of eternal happiness hereafter."

CHAPTER XIII.

HE was full of pity and compassion to souls, and yet greatly grieved and ashamed that he did no more to express his sense of the worth of souls, and that his bowels did no more sensibly yearn over them whom he had just cause to fear were in a Christless state. Though there were few of his kindred and relations, nay, of his neighbours and acquaintance, to whom he did not make a personal application, either by letters or conference, yet for all this none was more ready to cry out of want of love to souls, and unprofitableness to others in his generation ; that he was no more full of compassion ; and that he had made no better improvement of his various visits : in which we should not make carnal pleasure and recreation our end, but the imparting and receiving of some spiritual gift. This made him, after a considerable absence

from a dear friend, to groan out these complaints :
“ God by his providence hath often brought us together ; but to how little purpose, God and our consciences know. For my part, I may justly bewail my barrenness. O that I should be of so little use where I come ! O that my tongue and heart should be still so unfruitful ! I am ready to hope sometimes, that, if it should please God in his providence to bring us again together, we may be more profitable one to another.

“ And this indeed makes me more desirous of coming to you again than any thing else, that I may do some good among you. O how few study to advance the interest of Christ, and the benefit of one another’s souls in their visits, as they should and might do ! I am not able at present to order my affairs so as to come comfortably to you ; but I hope, ere long, the Lord will give me leave to see you, and be refreshed by you. I desire to supply my absence by this sure token of my remembrance of you ; and also that I might have an opportunity for that which we ought to eye most in the enjoyment of one another’s society. But I have found that, partly because of the narrowness of my heart, not being enlarged to bring forth into act what I have greatly desired ; partly because the malice of the enemy of our souls, who endeavours all that possibly he can to lay stumblingblocks in our way to real union and nearer acquaintance with God and Christian communion ;

from these and other causes it is, that I have been too little beneficial to you formerly.

“It may be, I may write that with freedom which in presence I should not have spoken. I shall take occasion, from your desire of my presence with you, to look higher to the desires of our souls to be in conjunction and communion with the highest good, who fills up all relations to our souls; who is our Father, our Husband, our Friend, our God, yea our All in all. But when I say, He is All in all, I mean more than that which we count all. For every one confesses, that it is God alone that doth bless all others things to us; and that it is not out of the nature of those things that we enjoy, that they are blessings. It is God which makes them comforts to us. And thus God is to be acknowledged All in all; common enjoyment!

“But, besides this, God is something to the soul, which he is by himself, and not in the mediation of the creatures. Where God is as a portion, and lived upon as our true happiness, He is not only the complement of other things, but He himself is the soul's sufficiency. I am a little obscure; I desire to be plainer: I mean, that through the dispensation of the Gospel, God is to be lived upon, delighted in, and chosen before all; for, for this very end hath Christ appeared, that he might make God approachable by man, and that we who are afar off may be made nigh.

“There is a nearness to God which we are not

only allowed, but called to in the loving dispensation of the Gospel ; so that now we are not to be strangers any longer, but friends ; we are to have fellowship and communion with God. Why do not our hearts even leap for joy ; why do not our souls triumph in these discoveries of love ? Even because we know not the greatness of our privileges, the highness of our calling, the excellency of our advancement, the blessedness of this life, the sweetness of these employments, the satisfaction of these joys, the comfort of this heavenly life, the delights of this communion with God. We know not the things which belong to our peace. And thus when God calls us to that for which he sent his Son, when Christ offers us that which cost him so dear ; we with the greatest unworthiness, vilest ingratitude, refuse, slight, and condemn it. What think we ! Doth it not go even to the heart of Christ ; and (to speak after the manner of men) doth it not grieve him to the soul, to behold his greatest love scorned, and the end of his agony to be more vilely accounted of than the basest of our desires ?

“ Let us, therefore, according to that high calling wherewith we are called, enter into a more intimate acquaintance with God ; and as we find our souls acting naturally towards those things which are dear to us, so let us strive to lighten our spiritual affections.

“ We are very apt to look upon duties as

burdens rather than privileges, and seasons of enjoying the greatest refreshments ; but these apprehensions are very low and earthly. O, that we could at length set ourselves to live a spiritual life ; to walk with God ; and out of a new nature to savour and relish those things which are above ! Could we but really, intensely, believingly desire that which is real happiness, and the heaven of heaven, union and communion with God ; these desires would bring some comfort.

“ As for me, you must give me allowance to get my affections more emptied into God ; though it be with a diminution of love to you ; and blessed will that day be, when all love will be fully swallowed up into God. But spiritual love doth not destroy natural affections, or relative obligations, but perfect and rectify them. And so I may, giving up myself to God, be still yours.”

CHAPTER XIV.

HE was not a little troubled at the barrenness of Christians in their discourse, and their not improving their society for the quickening and warming of their hearts ; the expense of precious time unaccountably, the ill management of visits, and the impertinency of their talk ; he often re-

flected upon with a holy indignation. It vexed him to the soul, to see what prizes sometimes were put into the hands of Christians, and how little skill and will they had to improve them for the building up of one another in the most holy faith; and that they who should be encouraging one another in the way to Zion, communicating experience, and talking of their country, and of the glory of that kingdom of which the saints are heirs, could satisfy themselves with empty, common, vain stuff; as if Christ, heaven, and eternity, were not things of as great worth as any thing else, that usually sounds in the ears and comes from the lips of professors. That the folly of common discourse among Christians might appear more, and that he might discover how little such language became those that profess themselves Israelites, and that say they are Jews, he once sat down silent, and took out his pen and ink, and wrote down in short-hand the discourses that passed for some time together, amongst those which pretended to more than common understanding in the things of God. And after a while he took his paper and read it to them, and asked them whether such talk was such as they would be willing God should record. This he did, that he might shame them out of that usual unobserved and unlamented, unprofitable communication, and fruitless squandering away of that inestimable jewel, opportunity. "O, to spend

an hour or two together, and to hear scarcely a word for Christ, or that speaks peoples' hearts in love with holiness ; is not this writing a brave, rational, divine discourse ? Where is our love to God and souls all this while ? Where is our sense of the preciousness of time, of the greatness of our account ? Should we talk thus, if we believed that we should hear of this again at the day of judgment ? And do we not know that we must give an account of every idle word ? Is this like those that understand the language of Canaan ? Did saints in former times use their tongues to no better purpose ? Would Enoch, David, or Paul have talked thus ? Is this the sweetest communion of saints upon earth ? How shall we do to spend eternity in speaking the praises of God, if we cannot find matter for an hour's discourse ?

“ Doth not this speak aloud, that our hearts are very empty of grace, and that we have little sense of those spiritual and eternal concerns upon us ? ”

As the barrenness and empty converse of Christians was a sin that he greatly bewailed, so the want of love amongst Christians, and their divisions, cost him many tears and groans ; and he did what he could to heal all the breaches that he could, by his tender, prudent, and Christian advice and counsel ; and if prayers, tears, entreaties, and counsels would prevail and cement differences, they should not long be open. Nay, if his letters would signify any thing to make an amicable and

Christian correspondence, it should not be wanting. And because the wounds of division are yet bleeding, I shall insert two healing letters of his, which speak what spirit he was of. They are as follows.

CHAPTER XV.

“It cannot be expected that wounds should be healed till their cause be removed. That which moveth me to write to you at present, and puts me upon intentions of writing again, is, that I may do my utmost, by mouth and pen, for the removal of that which is the cause of the inward grief and trouble of my soul; and I am persuaded of others also as well as mine; namely, those divisions, that I could not but observe to be between yourself and another Christian friend. I hope, after my asking counsel not only of my own heart, but of God also, he hath directed me to that which may be to his own glory, and the good of your soul; and not only for the removing of grief, but the rejoicing of the hearts of them upon whom former divisions had any effect.

“I therefore desire you to entertain these following lines, as the issues of deep affection to your soul, and the honour of religion. And I beseech you read them, not only as from me, who

desire your good with the strength of my soul, but as from God himself, of whose love your good improvement will be a token. That end which I propose to myself, I cannot but persuade myself, you yourself design, commend, and desire ; which is Christian charity, and that meek Gospel spirit which is so highly and frequently commended by our Saviour to the practice of his disciples. O that where there hath been any breaches, there might be the nearer union ; and that ye might be joined together in the same spirit, might keep the ‘unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’

“ And for this end, that you would remove all old hinderances, watch continually, lest you give, and be careful not to take, occasion of offence. The necessity, usefulness, sweetness of spiritual love appears by the word of God’s frequent urging of it, by the sense of Christians, the uncomfortableness and deformity of the contrary. Now, that you may, in an unintermitted constancy, enjoy peace within and without, and rejoice my soul ; I desire you to join your own endeavours with the consideration of those things which I shall allow and hereafter send to you.

“ First, consider that it is a Christian’s duty to go out of himself, to lay down his own ends and interests, and wholly to take upon him God’s cause ; to do all for God, and to act as under God ; to be God’s instruments in our souls and bodies, which are God’s. Thus did God create

man for his own glory, and not that man should seek himself; and when man fell, he fell out of God into himself: out of that divine order and composure of mind in which God had made him, into confusion; from a love of God, into a corrupt self-love and self-seeking. Now if we do but descend into our souls, and observe the actings, intents, and contrivances of them, we cannot but observe how confusedly and abominably all work together for the pampering, pleasing, and advancing of itself. We are not to think that if we do not presently discover this in ourselves, that it is not so with us. For, in some degree it is in every one, even in the truly regenerate; as far as they have the relics of corruption in them, so far they have in their souls this self-love. Now this disorder in our minds whereby they are taken off from their right ends, is that very natural corruption and depravedness which we received from Adam; and it is, and, to a spiritual sense, ought to be, worse than hell itself, inasmuch as the cause doth eminently contain all and more evil than the effect.

“This is the spiritual death, whereby we are dead in sin, the fruit of the first curse, ‘Thou shalt die the death.’ The soul’s life in this world is its being in God, and living to God, and enjoyment of God: and the soul’s eternal life will be so to know God as to be formed into his likeness, and to be received into a full participation of and

communion with God. The soul's death here is its being fallen off from God, and its being carried into itself; and its eternal death will be an utter separation from him.

“Now mankind being thus fallen from God, Christ is sent for this very end, to bring man back again to God. And then man is brought to God, when he is brought out of that state of self-love, into that state whereby he gives up himself wholly to God. Thus the soul, being quickened by the Spirit of God, leaveth off living to itself, which was its death; and lives to God, which is its life. Here comes in the great duty of denying ourselves for Christ's sake; which indeed were not duty, if there were nothing in us contrary to God.

“This then is our duty, not to seek our own things, before the things of God; to lay God's glory as the foundation of all our actions; and if there be any thing in us contrary to that, to give it no leave to stand in competition with God.

“Now, were this deeply rooted in our hearts, how would contention, anger, wrath, and heart-burning, and all things of this nature, cease! Such influence would the taking God's part against self have into the quiet and peace of men, that it cannot be without it.

“We see how wisely God hath ordered things, that the very act of man's being off from God

should be the cause of confusion, war, and misery: and what can be more just and equal than this, that God, who is the author of our being, should be the end of our being? O that our minds were again reduced to this frame! to live wholly to God. O that we were wrought into a thorough prejudice against self, which stands between us and true peace! I beg of you to spare some time from the world, and retire into privacy, where you may apply this to your own soul.

“ My prayer to God for you out of the strong yearnings of my soul towards you, is, that he would make this effectual to its intended end, for the inward peace of your soul, for your comfortable walking with God in this life, and that condition wherein the wisdom of God hath placed you. I write these lines with the strength of affection; I feel fear, grief, compassion, working strongly. O pity me in the midst of all these, whilst I cannot call to remembrance the cause of these without a flood of tears! ‘Fulfil therefore my joy, in being of one mind: yea, if there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort in love, if any fellowship in the Spirit, if any bowels of mercy; fulfil ye my joy, and be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.’ (Phil. ii. 1, 2.) I leave you to the love and mercy of God, and to the working of his Spirit, which alone is able to put life and power

into these words : which that he would do, is my earnest request and fervent prayer."

Now upon a faithful perusal of this letter, it pleased the Lord to give a meek and more complying spirit, and in a great measure it wrought its intended effect. The noble design of this peacemaker took so far as to produce an ingenuous acknowledgment, and sorrowful bewailing of the want of that self-denial, humility, meekness, and love, which so much become our sacred profession. Upon the hearing of this good news, how strangely was this good man transported ! Upon receipt of a letter from the former friend, which gave no small satisfaction and hopes that the former endeavours were not in vain, and that he might drive the nail to the head, he speedily backs his former letter with a second ; which speaks these words:—

“MY soul is enlarged towards you, and my affections work within me ; and yet give me leave now to lay aside those flames of natural affection, and to kindle my soul with divine love. Here there is no fear of running out too far, while all is in Christ and for Christ. O that now I could let out the strength of my soul, not as to yourself, but as to God ! O that my heart were more enlarged, that it may be comprehensive of a more full, true, Christian love ! God is altogether love-

ly ; and we are so far dark, ignorant, and blind, as we do not see and account him most amiable. O let me have such discoveries of his excellency, that my heart may pant, thirst, and break for its earnest longings after the richest participations of him ; that I may for ever be swallowed up of his love ! O that I may love him a thousand times more than I do ! that I may rejoice in him, and take the sweetest complacency and delight in him alone ; and that I could let out my affections most, where I see any thing of himself, any beams of the image of his holiness, and that beareth the impression of his Spirit ! Had you visited me from the dead, could my affections have moved more strongly, or my rejoicings have been greater, than they were at the receipt of those lines which I had from you, wherein so much of Christ in you, and the goodness of Christ to me, did appear ? Fulfil my joy in the Lord, refresh my bowels, and let not my rejoicing be in vain. If it hath pleased the Lord to make the imperfect and weak endeavours of his unworthy servant any way subservient to his own glory in you, it is that which I account myself unworthy of, and desire to receive it from him as a manifestation of the riches of his free goodness to myself ; knowing myself to be unworthy to be his instrument in the meanest service, much more in so great a one as this is. Hoping and persuading myself of the effectual work of my

former letter, I am encouraged to write again, both because of my promise, and your expectation, and the weighty nature of the subject that I was then upon, which was love ; true Christian love, which is a thing so comely, so beautiful and sweet, and of such power in all actions to make them divine and excellent, that there is no labour lost in endeavouring to get more of it, even in those in whom it most aboundeth. The Apostle, (1 Thess. iv. 9, 10,) though he knew that they were taught of God to love one another, and that they did it towards all the brethren, yet even them he beseecheth to abound more and more in that grace of love. The former principle out of which this love doth arise (as I informed you in my former letter) was the putting off our own interests, and putting on God's. Now I shall proceed in minding you of another Christian duty, which is effectual to the knitting us together in a firm operative love, and that is this, —that a Christian is to walk as one that is a member of Christ Jesus. Into what near and close union are those that are given him by the Father received ! How hath the Holy Ghost chosen out all the nearest natural relations to express and shadow out the closeness of that spiritual relation that is between Christ and his ! Christ is our King, and we his people ; he is our Master, and we are his servants ; he is our Shepherd, and we the sheep of his pasture ; he is our

Friend, and we his ; he is our Husband, and we are his spouse ; he the Vine, we the branches ; he our Head, and we are his members ; he is in us, and we in him ; he is our Life. This duty will have influence upon affections these ways.

“First. As Christ is our Head, and we are his members, so he hath an absolute command over us. And where this relation is real, obedience to the commands of Christ is sweet, and without constraint and force. Now this is Christ’s command, that we should love one another. ‘By this,’ saith he, ‘shall all men know you are my disciples, if ye love one another.’ Those relations into which Christ receiveth his speak and hold forth a willing, cheerful, full submission to the commands of Christ ; and what duty is there in all the Gospel which is more frequently and earnestly pressed than this ? ‘A new commandment give I unto you, That you love one another ; as I have loved you, so love one another. So full is the whole Scripture of obligations, both upon conscience and ingenuity, to this duty, that the wholestream of it seems to run into this channel of love. But Christ’s command is such an obligation as one that hath a spiritual sense to feel the strength of it cannot break. It is Christ that hath commanded, and shall not we obey ? Shall not the love of Christ constrain us ? Shall we be so unkind to him who hath been so kind to us, as to stand it out with him in so equal a com-

mand? Shall not the sweetness of Christ overcome us, that seeing his love was so great as not to spare his life for us, yea, and suffer more for us I believe than we think he did; nay, I may say, than we can conceive he did; and that which commends his love to us is, that he should do and suffer so much for us, that of his creatures we were become his enemies? Why should we not then cheerfully submit to him in this one command, Love one another? Doth not the very word love carry in it at the first hearing abundance of alluring violence? This is Christ's yoke; and here we may well say, His yoke is easy, and his burden is light. What is there in a life of divine love that we need be afraid of? What is there in this command that is grievous? How can this yoke be uneasy? What reason to be loath to take it on? But such is the base degeneracy and unreasonableness of corrupted nature, that when any thing comes in competition with self-love, then all bonds must be broken, all yokes must be cast off; and nothing will then keep us in, but we must and will take our own part, though never so bad: and our own part in the heart of passion must seem best, though it be contrary to infinite righteousness, which is God himself. O that we could once learn to lay aside this natural prejudice, which we have against whatsoever thwarts our humours, though it be never so just, holy, and rational! O that we could

look more narrowly, and search more exactly into ourselves, with a spiritual eye ! and then we could not but see that which would make us loathe ourselves, and to become abominable in our own eyes, and rather take any part than our own ; we should see so much deceitfulness in ourselves, as that we should think our case bad, though it seem never so good to our natural self, till we apply to the rule. Nature would have none but itself ; and though in our better composure of mind we may receive some other rule, yet in our passions we cannot spare time to go to any other rule ; but we take that which is next to hand, and self will be sure to be that. But we must, if we will be true Christians, learn to deny self, and wholly to submit ourselves to the command of Christ as our only rule. O let the power of Christ's love and command make us obedient to this command of love !

“Secondly. If we are to walk as members of Christ, who is our Head, this hath influence upon our affections, to oblige us to love one another, as from the command which the Head hath over the members, so from the conformity that is to be in the members to the Head. The Head and the members are not of two several natures ; but the same nature passeth from the Head through all the members. Now, if we be ingrafted into Christ, we must become of the same nature with him : let us be ‘followers of Christ as dear chil-

dren, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.' Paul bids us be followers of himself, as he was a follower of Christ. Christ, then, is to be our great pattern. He commands us to learn of him, for he was meek. Christ's love to us had breadth, and length, and depth, and height, which passeth knowledge. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friend ; but herein Christ commended his love to us, in that while we were enemies, Christ died for us.' Behold, what manner of love is this, that Christ hath bestowed on us ! ' Hereby perceive we the love of God,' (that is, Christ,) 'because he laid down his life for us.' (1 John iii. 16.) His inference is there the same with mine, and that in a higher degree ; 'we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' Do we see any loveliness or beauty in Christ Jesus ? Is there no excellency in his sweetness, pity, and patience ? Is not his lovingkindness amiable ? And would not something like this in us be desirable ? Had he more reason to love us than we have to love one another ? O let our souls be overcome with the thoughts of this love of Christ ; let our hearts be kindled and blown up in a flame of love by it. O when shall this pure, eternal love of his overpower our souls ? When shall it have its proper effects upon us, to make us to desire earnestly to be like our Beloved ? When shall we put on this beauty ? O how lovely should we then look ! Let

us put off that deformity that is upon our souls, which makes us so unlike to Christ; yea, which makes us loathsome in his eyes. Pride, passion, worldliness, are those foul deformities which keep Christ at such a distance from us, and which hinder his more sweet, frequent, and intimate converse with us.

“It is only that of himself which Christ seeth in us which he delighteth in. For in him is the perfection of all beauty and excellency; and whatsoever loveliness is in any thing else comes from him, is like him, and leads to him. Would we know how much we are beloved of him, let us see how much we are like him; for he cannot but love that which is like himself: and if we would be like him, we must put on love; for “God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” (1 John iv. 16.)

“Thirdly. If we ought to walk towards one another as members of the same body, whereof Christ is the Head, what can speak a closer union than membership? No man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it. But we do not feel the power of this oneness as we ought to do. We are many, and where there is division, there will be dissension: that we may therefore be more one, let us be more in putting off ourself, and going into Christ. Here let us look into the loathsomeness of our natures whilst separated from God, which is the cause of all this confusion; and

if we cannot see its deformity in itself, let us see it in its bitter effects ; and when we see our own deformity, we shall see less cause to love ourselves, and more cause to love others, than Christ had to love us. Let us look upon our oneness in Christ, and see if we can thence become one in affection. Christ saith, ‘I and the children which thou hast given me :’ we have one Father, we are brethren, let us love as brethren. The cause of this union is our being made partakers of Christ’s nature, and baptized into the same Spirit with him : and if we have at any time experienced the more lively and full influence of this Spirit of Christ, how did it set the heart on fire ! The soul is then too narrow to contain its own affections : how dearly then could we look upon a saint ! How did pride and wrath vanish, and melt down into meekness, humility, and love ! Did we never experience what this meaneth ? Then let the remembrance of the sweetness of it renew it in us. O, a life of spiritual love is a life indeed, a heaven upon earth ! This is a good rule : when we find ourselves in a spiritual temper, let us examine ourselves, and inquire how we like such a frame ; let us remember the voice of the Spirit in us, and labour to have our judgment and affections always so balanced.

“Fourthly. Are we members of Christ ? We do not say we do not love Christ. If we do indeed love Christ, let us love him wherever we find him. Christ is in all those that are his. Let us fear

offending Christ in his; for what is done to them he will take as done to himself. It will be said in that great day, 'Inasmuch as ye did unto these, ye did it unto me.' Let us think what we will of it at present, the world will find this true to their cost. And if we act as in Christ, we shall find ourselves as much concerned for him as for ourselves, and more too. O the wrongs that are done to him, we shall reckon done to us. If we are Christ's, Christ's interest will be ours, and his injuries ours. If we are Christ's, we will be as fearful of offending any of his as of wronging ourselves. Christ himself is above the reach of our wrongs to be touched by them in himself; but in his members he suffers to this very day. If then Christ and we are one, and Christ and all his are one, let us love Christ in his; let us rejoice in Christ in his members; let us endeavour to requite Christ in his members; let us fear grieving the Spirit of Christ in grieving the spirits of any of his people. Wound not Christ in wounding the heart of his beloved. O the preciousness, pleasure, and profit of his love! I beg of God to give you a full enjoyment of that sweetness and the joyful fruits of it; the Lord refresh you with a quick and constant sense and sight of his eternal love towards your soul; to which the assurance of true Christian love by the effectual work of the Comforter may bring you. 'By this we know that we are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.' If

it shall please the Lord to give me leave to see you again, I shall come with strong expectations and earnest desires of seeing a sweet alteration for the better in you, in your deportment and carriage towards one that did deserve better at your hands. And what an effect hope of this nature frustrated will produce, I beseech you to judge. I pray God fill you with peace and joy. My hand is weary with writing, but my mind still runs in desires and prayers for you. I hope the Lord will take away all cause of writing any more of this subject unto you. Your letter gave me hopes of a good beginning: I beseech the Lord to carry on what he hath begun to the glory of his goodness, that I may at every sight of you see more of the image of Christ in you, and more of the power and beauty of this grace of love, and that I may find you drawn nearer to heaven, and see you with Christ in heaven when time shall be no more. I leave you in the arms of love."

By all this you may easily perceive what spirit acted him, and how much he was troubled for any divisions amongst the people of God. Indeed he was of so loving and lovely a disposition, that he even commanded the affections of most that knew him; and so humble he was, that he was ashamed to be loved for his own sake.

I can never forget a strange expression that I have heard from him, concerning one who had a

very ardent love for him. "I know this," saith he, "that I love no love but what is purely for Christ's sake. I would Christ might have all the love; he alone deserves it: for my part, I am afraid and ashamed of the love and respect of Christians." He saw so much pride, peevishness, and division amongst professors, that it did not a little vex his righteous soul, and made him think long'to be in a sweeter air, where there should be nothing but union, joy, and love. He could not endure to hear Christians speak reproachfully one of another, because they were of different judgments and persuasions. There where he saw most holiness, humility, and love, there he let out most of his affections. And he was of that holy man's mind, that it were pity, that the very name of division were not buried, and that the time would come that we might all dearly pay for our unbrotherly, nay, unchristian animosities.

CHAPTER XVI.

FOR the latter part of his life, he lived like a man that was quite weary of the world, and that looked upon himself as a stranger here, and that lived in the constant sight of a better world. He plainly declared himself but a pilgrim, that looked for a better country, a city that had foun-

dations, whose builder and maker was God. His habit, his language, his deportment, all spoke him one of another world. His meditations were so intense, long, and frequent, that they ripened him apace for heaven, but somewhat weakened his body. Few Christians attain to such a holy contempt of the world, and to such clear, believing, joyful, constant apprehensions of the transcendent glories of the unseen world.

He made it his whole business to keep up sensible communion with God, and to grow into an humble familiarity with God, and to maintain it. And if by reason of company, or any necessary diversions, this was in any measure interrupted, he would complain like one out of his element, till his spirit was recovered into a more unmixed, free intercourse with God. He was never so well satisfied, as when he was more immediately engaged in what brought him nearer to God; and by this he enjoyed those comforts frequently which other Christians rarely meet with. His graces and experiences toward his end grew to astonishment. His faith got up to a full assurance; his desires into a kind of enjoyment and delight. He was oft brought into the banqueting house, and there Christ's banner over him was love; and he sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was pleasant unto his taste. His eyes beheld the King in his beauty; and while he sat at his table, his spikenard did

send forth its pleasant smell. He had frequent visions of glory; and this John lay in the bosom of his Master, and was a very beloved disciple, and highly favoured. His Lord often called him up to the mount to him, and let him see his excellent glory. O the sweet foretastes that he had of those pleasures that are at the right hand of God! *How oft was he feasted with the feast of fat things, those wines on the lees well refined! and sometimes he was like a giant refreshed with new wine, rejoicing to run the race that was set before him, whether of doing or of suffering. He was even sick of love, and he could say to the poor unexperienced world, "O taste and see!" and to Christians, "Come, and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul." O what do Christians mean that they do no more get their senses spiritually exercised? O why do they not make religion the very business of their lives? O why are the soul, Christ, and glory thus despised? Is there nothing in communion with God? are all those comforts of Christians that follow hard after him worth nothing? Is it not worth the while to make one's calling and election sure? O why do men jest and trifle in the great matter of eternity? Little do people think, what they slight, when they are seldom and formal in secret duties, and when they neglect that great duty of meditation, which I have through rich mercy found so sweet and refreshing. O

what do Christians mean, that they keep at such distance from Christ? Did they but know the thousandth part of that sweetness that is in him, they could not choose but follow him hard; they would run and not be weary, and walk and not be faint.

He could sensibly and experimentally commend the ways of God to the poor unexperienced world, and say, "His ways are pleasantness;" and justify wisdom, and say, her paths were peace. He could take off those aspersions, which the devil and the atheistical frantic cast upon godliness in the power of it. He could challenge all the atheists in the world to dispute; could bring sensible demonstrations to prove a Deity, and the reality and excellency of invisible things, which they make the subject of their scorn: he would not change delights with the greatest epicures living. Which of them all could in the midst of their jollity say, "This is the pleasure that shall last for ever?" Which of them can say among their cups, "I can now look death in the face;" and, "This very moment I can be content, yea, glad, to leave these delights, as knowing I shall enjoy better?" And this he could do, when he fared deliciously in spiritual banquets every day. He could upon better reason than the man in the parable say, "Soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years." He knew full well, that what he did here enjoy, was but a little compared with what he should

have shortly. "In his presence there is fulness of joy; at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Where is the Belshazzar that would not quake in the midst of his cups, whilst he is quaffing and carousing in bowls of the richest wine, if he should see a hand upon the wall writing bitter things against him, telling him that his joys are at an end, and that this night his soul must be required of him; that now he must come away, and give an account of all his ungodly pleasures, before the mighty God? Where is the sinner that could be contented to hear the Lord out of Zion, whilst he is roaring in the tavern? Which of them would be glad to hear the trumpet sound, and to hear that voice, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment?" Which of them would rejoice to see the mountains quaking, the elements melting with fervent heat, the earth consumed with flames; and the Lord Christ, whom they despised, coming in the clouds with millions of his saints and angels, to be avenged upon those that know not God, and obey not his Gospel? Is not that a blessed state, when a man can lift up his head with joy, when others tremble with fear, and sink with sorrow? And this was the condition of this holy young man. In the midst of all worldly comforts he longed for death; and the thoughts of the day of judgment made all his enjoyments sweeter. O how did he long for the coming of Christ! Whilst some have been dis-

coursing by him of that great and terrible day of the Lord, he would smile, and humbly express his delight in the forethought of that approaching hour.

I remember once there was a great talk that one had foretold that Doomsday should be upon such a day: although he blamed their daring folly, that would pretend to know that which was hid from the angels themselves, and that the devil could not acquaint them with. "Yet granting their suspicion to be true, what then?" said he. "What, if the day of judgment were come, as it will most certainly come shortly? If I were sure the day of judgment were to begin within an hour, I shall be glad with all my heart. If at this very instant I should hear such thunderings and see such lightnings, as Israel did at Mount Sinai, I am persuaded my very heart would leap for joy. But this I am confident of, through infinite mercy, that the very meditation of that day hath even ravished my soul, and the thought of the certainty and nearness of it is more refreshing to me than the comforts of the whole world. Surely nothing can more revive my spirit, than to behold the blessed Jesus, the joy, life, and beauty of my soul. Would it not more rejoice me than Joseph's waggons did old Jacob? I lately dreamed that the day of judgment was come. I thought I heard terrible cracks of thunder, and saw dreadful lightnings; the foundations of the earth did

shake, and the heavens were rolled together as a garment ; yea, all things visible were in a flame. I thought I saw the graves opened, and the earth and sea giving up their dead. I thought I saw millions of angels, and Christ coming in the clouds. I thought I beheld the Ancient of days sitting upon his throne, and all other thrones cast down. I thought I beheld him whose garments were white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire ; a fiery stream issued and came forth from him ; thousands of thousands ministered unto him ; and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him ; and the judgment was set, and the books were opened. O but with what an ecstasy of joy was I surprised ! I thought it was the most heart-raising sight that ever my eyes beheld ; and then I cried out, ‘I have waited for thy salvation, O God ;’ and so I mounted into the air, to meet my Lord in the clouds.”

This I record, only to show how far he was from being daunted at the thoughts of death or judgment ; and to let other Christians know what is attainable in this life ; and what folly it is for us to take up with so little when our Lord is pleased to make such noble provision for us ; and by a wise and diligent improvement of those means which God hath offered us, we may have an entrance ministered to us abundantly into the

everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

O how comfortable, how honourable, and how profitable is this state ! These are your men that quit themselves like Christians. This is true gallantry, noble manhood, real valour. This was the condition of Mr. Janeway for about three years before he died. I will not deny but that he had some clouds ; but he usually walked in a sweet, even, humble serenity of spirit, and his refreshing joys were more considerable than his despondings ; and though he daily questioned many actions, yet he did not question his state, but had his heart fixed upon that Rock that never waves nor winds could shake. His senses were still so spiritually exercised, as that he could look up to heaven as his country and inheritance, and to God as his Father, and to Christ as his Redeemer ; and (that which is scarcely to be heard of) he counted it the highest act of patience to be willing to live, and a very great pitch of self-denial to be contented to be in this world, and to be kept from a full and eternal enjoyment of that royal glorious One, whom his soul was so much in love with. In a word, he had the most earnest desires to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, that ever I saw, read, or heard of, since the Apostles' times.

CHAPTER XVII.

AND now the time draws nigh, wherein his longings shall be satisfied: he is called to his last work; and truly, his deportment in it was honourable; his carriage so eminently gracious, so meek, patient, fruitful, joyful, and thankful, that it made all his friends stand and wonder, as being abundantly above their experience and reading; and those Christians that saw him could not but admire God in him, and look upon him as one of the most singular instances of rich grace, and even bless God, that their eyes ever saw, or their ears ever heard such things, and had such a sensible demonstration of the reality of invisible things.

His body was shaken again, and he fell into a deep consumption; but this messenger of God did not in the least damp him. Spitting of blood was no ghastly thing to one that had his eye upon the blood of Jesus; faint sweats did not daunt him that had always such reviving cordials at hand. It was matter of joy to him, that he was now in some hope of having his earnest desires satisfied.

After he had been a while sick, a sudden dimness seized upon his eyes. By and by his sight quite failed; and there was such a visible alteration in him, that he and others judged these things to be the symptoms of death approaching. But when

he was thus taken, he was not in the least surprised ; but was lifted up with joy to think what a life he was going to, looking upon death itself as one of his Father's servants, and his friends, that was sent as a messenger to conduct him safely to his glorious palace.

When he felt his body ready to faint, he called to his mother, and said, " Dear mother, I am dying ; but I beseech you be not troubled, for I am, through mercy, quite above the fears of death. It is no great matter : I have nothing that troubles me but the apprehensions of your grief. I am going to Him whom I love above life."

But it pleased the Lord to raise him again a little out of his fainting fit ; for his Master had yet more work for him to do before he must receive his wages. Although his outward man decayed apace, yet he was renewed in the inward man day by day. His graces were never more active, and his experience was never greater. When one would have thought he should have been taken up with his distemper, and that it had been enough for him to grapple with his pains, then he quite forgot his weakness, and was so swallowed up by the life to come, that he had scarcely leisure to think of his sickness.

For several weeks together I never heard the least word that savoured of any complaint of weariness under the hand of God, except his eager desire to be with Christ be counted complaining,

and his haste to be in heaven be called impatience. Now was the time when one might have seen heaven and the glory of another world realized to sense. His faith grew exceedingly ; his love was proportionable ; and his joys were equal to both.

O the rare attainments, the high and divine expressions, that dropped from his mouth ! I have not words to express what a strange, triumphant, angelical frame he was in for some considerable time together. It was a very heaven upon earth, to see and hear a man admiring God at such a rate, as I never heard any, nor expect to hear or see more, till I come to heaven. Those that did not see cannot well conceive what a delightful frame he was in for at least six weeks before he died. His soul was almost always filled with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." How often would he cry out,—“O that I could but let you know what I now feel ! O that I could show you what I see ! O that I could express the thousandth part of that sweetness that I now find in Christ ! You would all then think it well worth the while to make it your business to be religious. O, my dear friends, we little think what Christ is worth upon a death-bed. I would not for a world, nay, for millions of worlds, be now without Christ and a pardon. I would not for a world live any longer : the very thought of a possibility of recovery makes me even tremble.”

ever I desired any thing of you in my life, that you would cheerfully give me up to Christ. I beseech you, do not hinder me, now that I am going to rest and glory! I am afraid of your prayers, lest they pull one way and mine another."

And then, turning to his brethren, he spoke thus to them: "I charge you all, do not pray for my life any more; you do me wrong, if you do. O that glory, the unspeakable glory that I behold! My heart is full, my heart is full. Christ smiles, and I cannot choose but smile. Can you find in your heart to stop me, who am now going to the complete and eternal enjoyment of Christ? Would you keep me from my crown? The arms of my blessed Saviour are open to embrace me; the angels stand ready to carry my soul into his bosom. O did you but see what I see, you would all cry out with me, 'How long, O Lord?' 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!' 'O why are his chariot-wheels so long a coming?'"

All this while he lay like a triumphing conqueror, smiling and rejoicing in spirit.

There was never a day towards his end but (as weak as he was) he did some especial service for his great Master. Yea, almost every hour produced fresh wonders.

A judicious and holy Minister came often to visit him, and discoursed with him of the excellency of Christ, and the glory of the invisible

world. "Sir," said he, "I feel something of it ; my heart is as full as it can hold in this lower state ; I can hold no more here. O that I could but let you know what I feel !"

This Minister praying with him, his soul was ravished with the abundant incomes of light, life, and love ; so that he could scarcely bear it, nor the thoughts of staying any longer in the world ; but longed to be in a condition wherein he should have more grace, and more comfort, and be better able to bear that weight of glory, some manifestations whereof did even almost sink his weak body ; and had he not been sustained by a great power, his very joys would have overwhelmed him.

Whilst he was in these ecstasies of joy and love, he was wont to cry out :—"Who am I, Lord, who am I, that thou shouldest be mindful of me ? What shall I say unto thee, O thou Preserver of men ? Blessed, and for ever blessed, be free grace ! And if thou wilt look upon such a poor worm, who can hinder ? Who would not love thee ! O blessed Father, how gracious hast thou been to me !"

And thus he went on, admiring and adoring God, in a more high and heavenly manner than I can express in words. Suppose what you can on this side heaven, and I am persuaded you might have seen it in him. He was wonderfully taken with the goodness of God to him in sending that aged experienced Minister to help him in his last

great work upon earth. "Who am I," said he, 'that God should send to me a messenger one among a thousand?' meaning that Minister who had been praying with him with tears of joy.

Though he was, towards his end, commonly in a triumphant joyful frame, yet sometimes he would cry out, "Hold out, faith and patience; yet a little while, and your work is done." And when he found not his heart wound up to the highest pitch of thankfulness, admiration, and love, he would with great sorrow bemoan himself, and cry out in this language:—

"And what is matter now? O my soul, what wilt thou? canst thou thus unworthily slight this admirable and astonishing condescension of God to thee? Seems it a small matter, that the great Jehovah should deal thus familiarly with this worm; and wilt thou pass this over as a common mercy? What meanest thou, O my soul, that thou dost not constantly adore and praise this unspeakable love? Is it true, O my soul, that God doth deal familiarly with man? and are humble, zealous, and constant love, praise, and service too good for God? Why art not thou, O my soul, swallowed up every moment with this free, unparalleled, everlasting love?"

And then he broke out again into another triumphant ecstasy of praise and joy, and expressed a little of that which was inexpressible in some such words as these:—

“Stand astonished, ye heavens, and wonder, O ye angels, at this infinite grace! Was ever any under heaven more beholden to free grace than I? Doth God use to do thus with his creatures? Admire him for ever and ever, O ye redeemed ones. O those joys, the taste of which I have! the everlasting joys, which are at his right hand for evermore! Eternity, eternity itself is too short to praise this God in. O bless the Lord with me; come, let us shout for joy, and boast in the God of our salvation. Help me to praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever.”

One of his brethren (that had formerly been wrought upon by his holy exhortations and example) praying with him, and seeing him, as he apprehended, near his dissolution, desired that the Lord would be pleased to continue those astonishing and soul-supporting comforts to the last moment of his breath, and that he might go from one heaven to another, from grace and joy imperfect, to perfect grace and glory; when his work was done here, give him, if it were his will, the most easy and triumphant passage to rest; and that he might have an abundant entrance ministered into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

At the end of the duty, he burst out into a wonderful passion of joy. It was joy unspeakable and full of glory! O what an Amen did he speak! “Amen! amen! amen! Hallelujah!”

It would have made any Christian's heart to leap, to have seen and heard what some saw and heard at that time; and I question not, but that it will somewhat affect them to hear and read it; though it be scarcely possible to speak the half of what was admirable in him. For, it being so much beyond precedent, it did even astonish and amaze those of us that were about him, that our relation must fall hugely short of what was real.

I verily believe that it exceeds the highest rhetoric, to set out to the life what this heavenly creature did then deliver. I say again, I want words to speak, and so did he; for he saw things unutterable. But yet, so much he spake as justly drew the admiration of all that saw him; and I heard an old experienced Christian and Minister say it again and again, that he never saw, nor read, nor heard the like. Neither could we ever expect to see the glories of heaven more demonstrated to sense in this world. He talked as if he had been in the third heaven, and broke out in such words as these:—

“O He is come! He is come! O how sweet, how glorious is the blessed Jesus! How shall I do to speak the thousandth part of his praises! O for words to set out a little of that excellency! But it is inexpressible! O how excellent, glorious, and lovely is Jesus! He is sweet, He is altogether lovely. And now I am sick of love! He hath ravished my soul with beauty.

“O, my friends, stand by, and wonder ; come, look upon a dying man, and wonder ; I cannot myself but stand and wonder ! Was there ever a greater kindness ? Was there ever a more sensible manifestation of rich grace ? Surely this is akin to heaven ; and if I were never to enjoy any more than this, it were well worth all the torments that men and devils could invent, to come through even a hell to such transcendent joys as these. If this be dying, dying is sweet. Let no true Christians ever be afraid of dying. Death is sweet to me. This bed is soft. Christ’s arms, his smiles and visits, sure they would turn hell into heaven. O that you did but see and feel what I do ! Come and behold a dying man more cheerful than ever you saw any healthful man in the midst of his sweetest enjoyments. O Sirs, worldly pleasures are pitiful, poor, sorry things, compared with one glimpse of this glory, which shines in so strongly into my soul ! O why should any of you be sad, when I am so glad ? This, this is the hour that I have waited for.”

About eight-and-forty hours before his death his eyes were dim, and his sight much failed ; his jaws shook and trembled, his feet were cold, all the symptoms of death were upon him, his extreme parts were already almost dead and senseless ; and yet, even then, his joys were, if possible, greater still. He had so many fits of joy

unspeakable, that he seemed to be in one continued act of seraphic love and praise. He spake like one that was just entering into the gates of the new Jerusalem. The greatest part of him was now in heaven; not a word dropped from his mouth but what breathed Christ and heaven. O what encouragements did he give to them that stood by, to follow hard after God, and to follow Christ in an humble, believing, zealous course of life, adding one degree of grace to another, using all diligence to make their calling and election sure; and that then they also might find that they should have a glorious passage into a blessed eternity!

But most of his work was praise, a hundred times admiring the bottomless love of God to him. And then he would give instructions to them that came to see him. He was scarcely ever silent, because the love of Christ and souls constrained him. There was so much work done for Christ in his last hours, that I am ready to think he did as much in an hour as some do in a year.

Every particular person had a faithful affectionate warning. And that good Minister, that was so much with him, used this as an argument to persuade him to be willing to live a little longer, and to be patient to tarry God's leisure: "Surely God hath something for thee to do that is yet undone; some word of exhortation to some poor soul, that you have forgotten."

The truth is, he was filled with the love of Christ, so that he could scarcely bear absence from him a moment. He knew that he should be capable of bearing greater glory above than he could be here. It was the judgment of some that were with him, that his heart was not only habitually but actually set on God all the day long, and nothing of human frailty, that could be thought a sin, appeared for some time, except it were his passionate desire to die, and difficulty to bring himself to be willing to stay below heaven.

He was wont every evening to take his leave of his friends, hoping not to see them till the morning of the resurrection ; and he desired that they would make sure of a comfortable meeting at our Father's house in that other world.

I cannot relate the twentieth part of that which deserved to be written in letters of gold. One of the weakest said, he did verily believe, that if we had been exact in taking his sentences, and observing his daily experience, he could not imagine a book that could be published of greater use to the world, next to the Bible itself.

One rare passage I cannot omit, which was this,—that when the Ministers or Christians came to him, he would beg of them to spend all the time that they had with him in praise : “ O help me to praise God ! I have now nothing else to do from this time to eternity, but to praise and love God. I have what my soul desires upon earth ;

I cannot tell what to pray for, but what I have graciously given to me. The wants that are capable of being supplied in this world are supplied. I want but one thing, and that is a speedy lift to heaven. I expect no more here ; I cannot desire more ; I cannot bear more. O praise, praise, praise that infinite boundless love that hath, to a wonder, looked upon my soul, and done more for me than for thousands of his children ! Bless the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within me, bless his holy name ! Help me, help me, O my friends, to praise and admire Him that hath done such astonishing wonders for my soul ! He hath pardoned all my sins ; he hath filled me with his goodness ; he hath given me grace and glory, and no good thing hath he withheld from me.

“Come, help me with praises ; all is too little. Help me, O ye glorious and mighty angels, who are so well skilled in this heavenly work of praise ! Praise him, all ye creatures upon the earth ; let every thing that hath being, help me to praise him. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah ! Praise is now my work, and I shall be engaged in that sweet employment for ever. Bring the Bible ; turn to David’s psalms, and let us sing a psalm of praise. Come, let us lift up our voice in the praise of the Most High. I will join with you as long as my breath doth last ; and when I have none, I shall do it better.”

And then turning to some of his friends that were weeping, he desired them rather to rejoice than weep upon his account. It may justly seem a wonder, how he could speak so much as he did, when he was so weak ; but the joy of the Lord strengthened him.

In his sickness the scriptures that he took much delight in were the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters of the Gospel of St. John. The fifty-fourth of Isaiah was very refreshing also to him ; he would repeat that word, "with everlasting mercies will I gather thee," with abundance of joy.

He commended the study of the promises to believers, and desired that they would be sure to make good their claim to them ; and then they might come to the wells of consolation, and drink thereof abundantly.

According to his desire, most of the time that was spent with him, was spent in praise ; and he would still be calling out, "More praise still ! O help me to praise him ! I have now nothing else to do. I have done with prayer, and all other ordinances. I have almost done conversing with mortals. I shall presently be beholding Christ himself, that died for me, and loved me, and washed me in his blood.

"I shall, before a few hours are over, be in eternity, singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. I shall presently stand upon Mount

Zion, with an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. I shall hear the voice of much people, and be one amongst them, who shall say, 'Hallelujah, salvation, glory, honour, and power unto the Lord our God : ' and again we shall say, Hallelujah. Yet a very little while, and I shall sing unto the Lamb a song of praise, saying, 'Worthy art thou to receive praise who wert slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests ; and we shall reign with thee for ever and ever ! '

"I think I stand as it were with one foot in heaven, and the other upon earth ; I think I hear the melody of heaven ; and by faith I see the angels waiting to carry my soul to the bosom of Jesus. I shall be for ever with the Lord in glory. Who can choose but rejoice in all this ? "

At several times he spake this language, and repeated many of these words over and over again, with far greater affection than can be well described. I solemnly profess, that what is here written is no hyperbole ; that the twentieth part of what was observable in him is not recorded. Though we cannot word it exactly as he did, yet you have the substance, and many things in his own words, with little or no variation.

The day before his death, he looked somewhat

earnestly upon his brother James, who stood by him very sad; of whom he judged that he was putting up some ejaculations to God upon his account: "I thank thee, dear brother, for thy love," said he: "thou art now praying for me; and I know thou lovest me dearly. But Christ loveth me ten thousand times more than thou dost. Come, and kiss me, dear brother, before I die." And so with his cold dying lips he kissed him, and said, "I shall go before, and I hope thou shalt follow after to glory."

Though he was almost always praising God, and exhorting them that were about him to mind their everlasting concerns, and secure an interest in Christ; and though he slept very little for some nights, yet he was not in the least impaired in his intellects; but his actions were all decent, and becoming a man; and his discourse to a spiritual understanding, highly rational, solid, divine. And so he continued to the last minute of his breath

A few hours before his death, he called all his relations and brethren together, that he might give them one solemn warning more, and bless them, and pray for them, as his breath and strength would give him leave. This he did with abundance of authority, affection, and spirituality; which take briefly as follows:—

First, he thanked his dear mother for her tender love to him; and desired that she might

be in travail to see Christ formed in the souls of the rest of her children, and meet them with joy in that great day.

Then he charged all his brethren and sisters in general, as they would answer it before God, that they should behave dutifully to their mother. As for his eldest brother William, (at whose house he lay sick,) his prayer was, that he might be swallowed up in Christ, and love to souls; be more and more exemplary in his life, and successful in his ministry, and finish his course with joy.

The next brother's name was Andrew, a citizen of London, who was with him, and saw him in this triumphing state; but, his necessary business calling him away, he could not then be by; yet he was not forgotten, but thus blessed:—"The God of heaven remember my poor brother at London! The Lord make him truly rich in giving him the pearl of great price, and making him a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God! The Lord deliver him from the sins of that city! May the world be kept out of his heart, and Christ dwell there! O that he may be as his name is, a strong man, and that I may meet him with joy!"

Then he called his next brother, whose name was James, (whom he hoped God had made him a spiritual father to,) to whom he thus addressed himself:—"Brother James, I hope the Lord hath

given thee a goodly heritage: the lines are fallen to thee in pleasant places; the Lord is thy portion. I hope the Lord hath showed thee the worth of Christ. Hold on, dear brother; Christ, heaven, and glory are worth striving for. The Lord give thee more abundance of his grace!"

Then his next brother, Abraham, was called, to whom he spake to this purpose:—"The blessing of the God of Abraham rest upon thee; the Lord make thee a father of many spiritual children!"

His fifth brother was Joseph, whom he blessed in this manner:—"Let him bless thee, O Joseph, that blessed him that was separated from his brethren. O that his everlasting arms may take hold on thee! It is enough, if yet thou mayest live in his sight. My heart hath been working towards thee, poor Joseph; and I am not without hopes, that the arms of the Almighty will embrace thee. The God of thy father bless thee with the blessing of heaven above."

The next was his sister Mary, to whom he spake thus:—"Poor sister Mary! thy body is weak, and thy days will be filled with bitterness; thy name is Marah: the Lord sweeten all with his grace and peace, and give thee health in thy soul! Be patient, make sure of Christ, and all is well."

Then his other sister, whose name was Sarah, was called, whom he thus blessed:—"Sister

Sarah, thy body is strong and healthful. O that thy soul may be so too! The Lord make thee first a wise virgin, and then a mother in Israel; a pattern of modesty, humility, and holiness!"

Then another brother, Jacob, was called, whom he blessed after this manner:—"The Lord make thee an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile! O that thou mayest learn to wrestle with God, and like a prince prevail, and not go without the blessing."

Then he prayed for his youngest brother, Benjamin, who was then but an infant:—"Poor little Benjamin! O that the Father of the fatherless would take care of thee, poor child, that thou who never sawest thy father upon earth may see him with joy in heaven! The Lord be thy Father and portion; mayest thou prove the son of thy mother's right hand, and the joy of her age."

"O that none of us all may be found amongst the unconverted in the day of judgment! O that every one of us may appear, with our honoured father and dear mother, before Christ with joy, that they may say, 'Lord, here are we, and the children which thou hast graciously given us!' O that we may live to God here, and live with him hereafter!"

"And now, my dear mother, brethren, and sisters, farewell. I leave you for a while; and I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give

you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

“And now, O Lord, my work is done. I have finished my course, I have fought the good fight; and henceforth there remaineth for me a crown of righteousness! Now come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.”

Then that godly Minister came to give him his last visit, and to do the office of an inferior angel, to help to convey his blessed soul to glory, who was now upon Mount Pisgah, and had a full sight of that godly land at a little distance. When this Minister spake to him, his heart was in a mighty flame of love and joy, which drew tears of joy from that Minister, being almost amazed to hear a man just dying, talk as if he had been with Jesus, and come from the immediate presence of God. O the smiles that were then in his face, and the unspeakable joy that was in his heart! One might have read grace and glory in such a man's countenance. O the praise, the triumphant praise, that he put up! And every one must speak praise about him, or else they made some jar in his harmony. And indeed most did, as well as they could, help him in praise. So that I never heard nor knew more praise given to God in any place, than in this chamber.

A little before he died, he was so wrapped up with admiration and joy, that he could scarcely forbear shouting for joy. In the conclusion of the

duty, with abundance of faith and fervency, he said aloud, "Amen! amen!"

And now his desires shall soon be satisfied. He seeth death coming apace to do his office. His jaws are loosened more and more, and quaver greatly. His hands and feet are as cold as clay, and a cold sweat is upon him. But, O how glad was he when he felt his spirit just going! Never was death more welcome to any mortal, I think. Though the pangs of death were strong, yet that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory made him endure those bitter pains with much patience and courage. In the extremity of his pains, he desired his eldest brother to lay him a little lower, and take away one pillow from him, that he might die with the more ease. His brother replied, that he durst not for a world do any thing that might hasten his death a moment. Then he was well satisfied, and sweetly resigned himself up wholly to God's disposal; and after a few minutes, with a sudden motion, gathering up all his strength, he gave himself a little turn on one side, and immediately departed to the Lord, sleeping in Jesus.

Now, blessed soul, thy longings are satisfied; thou seest and feelest a thousand times more than thou didst upon earth; and yet thou canst bear it with delight. Thou art now welcomed to thy Father's house by Christ, the Beloved of thy soul. Now thou hast heard him say, "Come, thou

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